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1012 Deepwood Place • Landfall • $1,525,000

Combine the creative genius of architect Michael Moorefield with the attention to detail of Master Craftsman Fred Murray and you will arrive at 1012 Deepwood Place. A timeless design built for the ages, this all brick residence is located on a quiet cul-de-sac and is accessed by a private, gated land bridge over a freshwater pond enhanced with two fountains.

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1615 Landfall Drive • Landfall • $995,000

Wake up to glorious sunrises over the shimmering waters of the intracoastal waterway from this high bluff setting in Wilmington's award winning gated community of Landfall with resort style amenities through the country club of Landfall (membership optional). This 3 bedroom 2 1/2 bath home will welcome you from the moment you step inside.

9 Stone Street • Wrightsville Beach • $965,000

This charming 1930's beach cottage is the perfect family retreat on Wrightsville Beach! In the heart of the island on one of the most well-known streets, 9 Stone St is convenient to local restaurants and shopping. You will love everything this home has to offer from the welcoming covered front porch to the bright and airy white painted wood panel walls.

1608 Dye Place • Landfall • $719,000

When only the best will do. "Las Palmas" offers security, serenity and privacy with the double villa lot setting completely fenced and gated. Located between the Intracoastal Waterway and Landfall's Pete Dye Clubhouse and golf course, this resort styled family compound features two brick residences centered around an elegant salt water pool and cascading fountain.

2 Oak Landing Road • Oak Landing Townhomes • $575,000

A tranquil park-like setting, centuries-old live oaks, a 35-foot boat slip in a private marina with easy access to the ICW, and an open floor plan are just a few special features of this unique Cape-Cod style home. At over 25-foot elevation, this home is above the flood plain, yet only minutes from Wrightsville Beach, dining, entertainment, and shopping by car, bike, or boat.

1403 Quadrant Circle • Landfall • $1,199,000

A Landfall Georgian masterpiece, this all brick executive home sits high on a wooded knoll overlooking Quadrant Circle pond. Completely updated this open floor plan features large rooms, exquisite moldings including raised panel den off of the first floor master. Updates throughout the home including stainless and granite kitchen and granite counters in all baths.

1208 Pembroke Jones Drive • Landfall • $1,185,000

Landfall-spectacular contemporary new construction located just off the Intracoastal Waterway and overlooking one of Landfall's tranquil ponds. This 4300 square foot residence offers abundant natural light through it's two-story lateral wall of glass.

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1140 Turnberry Lane • Landfall • $902,450

Attention to detail, unsurpassed construction quality and its extraordinary one acre lot sitting majestically high above Landfall Lake, makes this family-friendly home a Landfall classic. Picture this . . . .on the first floor, family and friends enjoy breakfast in the sun room with its lake vista. Some follow with a game in the library, others chat on the covered flagstone back porch or in the cozy living room.

1859 Senova Trace • Landfall • $784,999

Located in the award-winning gated community of Landfall, this "like new" construction home has it all! This beautiful home has a welcoming coastal feel with its exterior tabby accents and metal roof. Inside you'll love the open floor plan with wide plank wood floors, coffered ceiling, and contemporary gas fireplace.

205 Center Drive • Washington Acres • $475,000

Beautiful custom home with deeded rights to private boat ramp and large .64 acre lot. Layout offers first level master suite, family room with fireplace and vaulted ceiling, open kitchen with granite, stainless appliances & breakfast nook. Second level features three bedrooms each with private full baths plus bonus room. .

137 Salem Court • Brandywine • $279,900

New construction! Single family home, all one level, on 1/3 acre cul-de-sac lot. This lovely property offers timeless design & numerous "smart home" features(re: "Ring" doorbell & security camera attached to garage flood lights, Wifi enabled garage door, etc.) Granite counter tops, Luxury Vinyl Plank flooring throughout + over sized bath tub in 2nd bathroom

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1523 Pembroke Jones Drive | Landfall | Currently Listed at: $1,375,000

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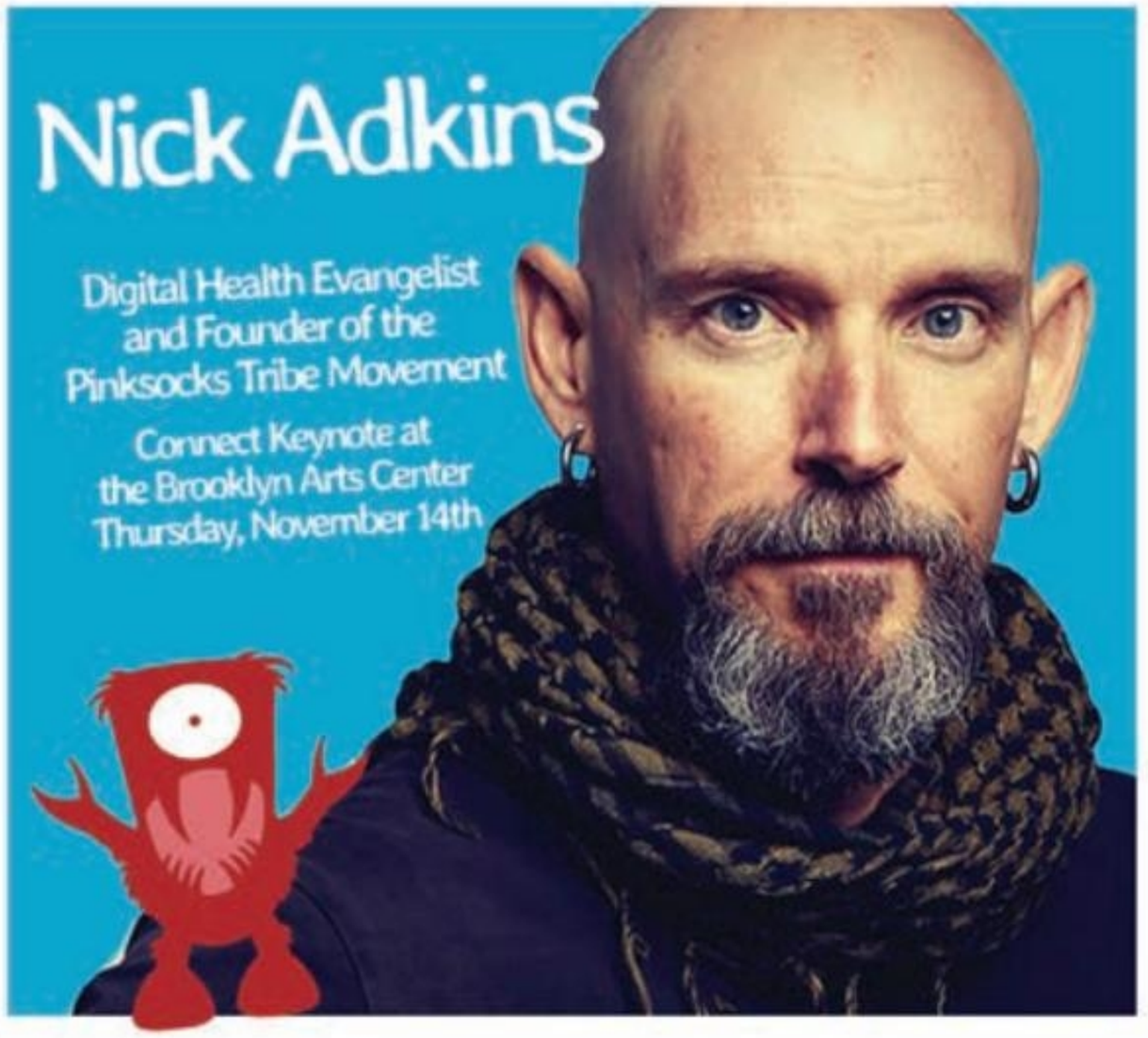

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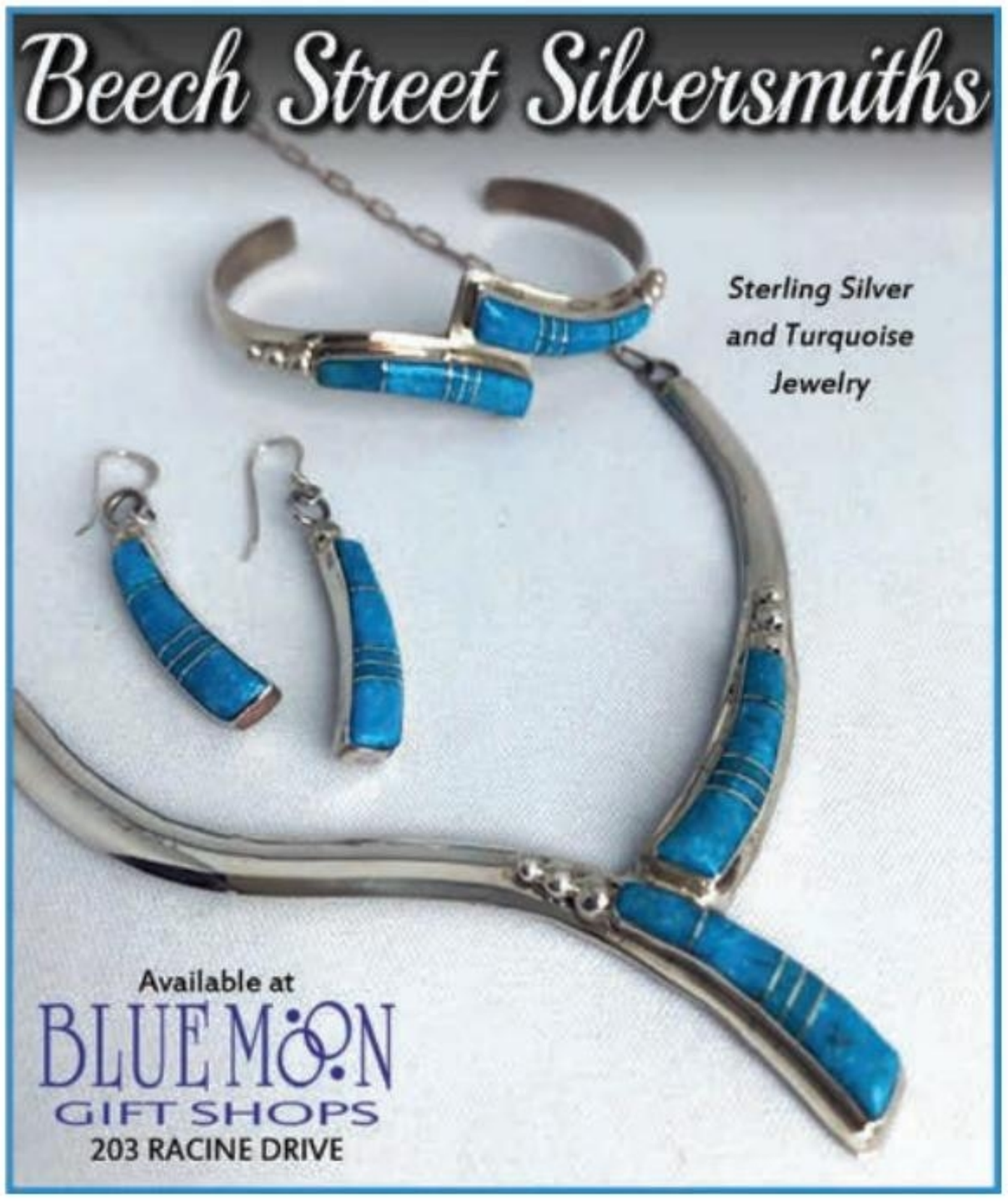
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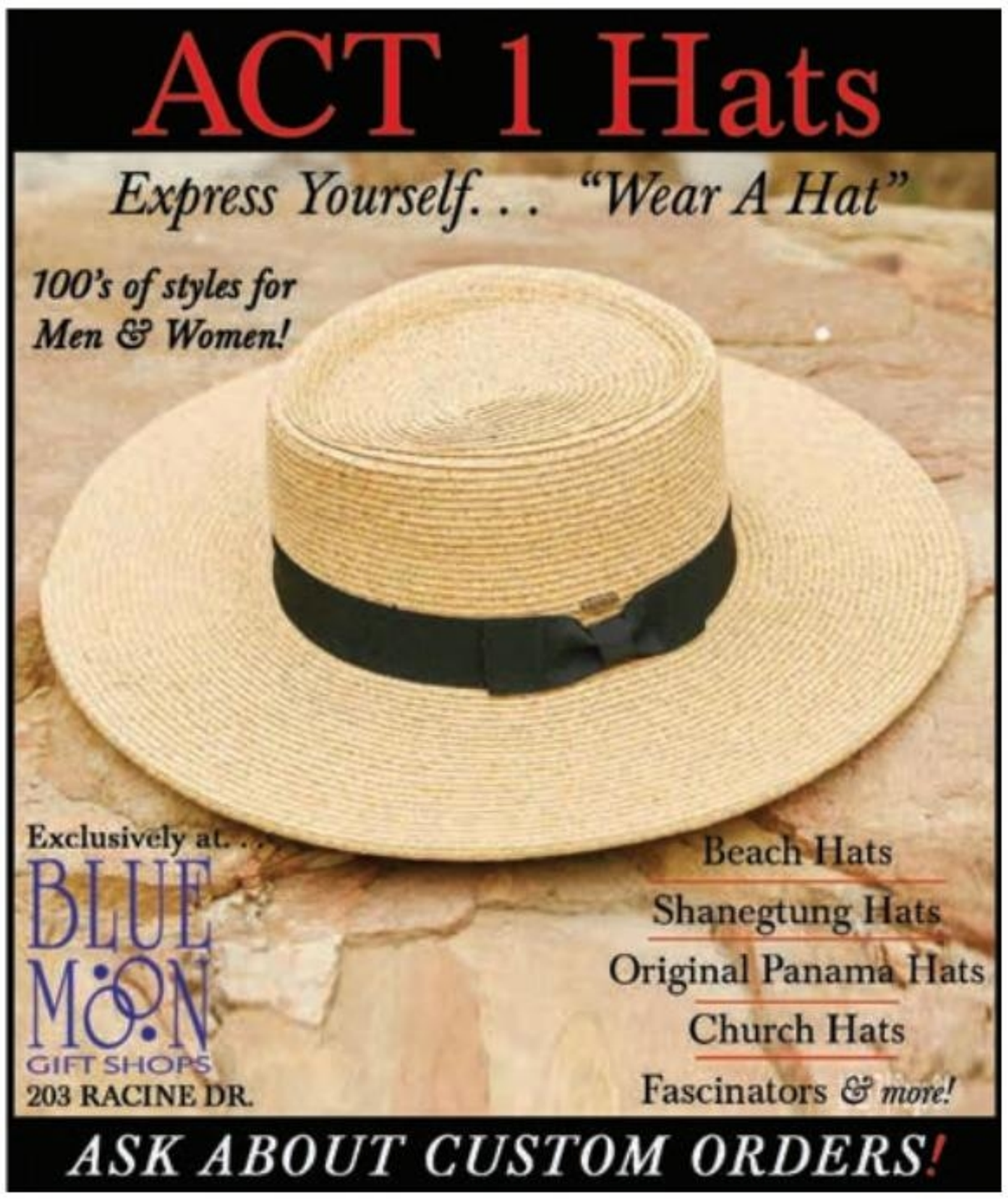
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The World After Rain

A good soak is the gift that keeps on giving

By Jim Dodson

Every year about this time, as another summer's lease expires, I remark to anyone who will listen (i.e. mostly my dog Mulligan) that we've survived the hottest summer ever.

Unfortunately, this year I turned out to be right. According to the National Weather Service, the months of June and July logged their hottest temperatures on record, symptomatic of a year forecasters predict will be hottest in history — for the third summer in a row.

If misery does indeed love company, at least we weren't sweating it out alone.

In England, suffering through its own record heat wave, jurors weighing evidence in a sensational murder trial in Oxford were dismissed after complaining to the judge of being unable to concentrate due to intense heat. The case involved a church warden and a magician who allegedly conspired to murder a famous Oxford lecturer and his headmistress neighbor in a scheme to steal their pensions and wills, a plot line worthy of Dame Agatha Christie.

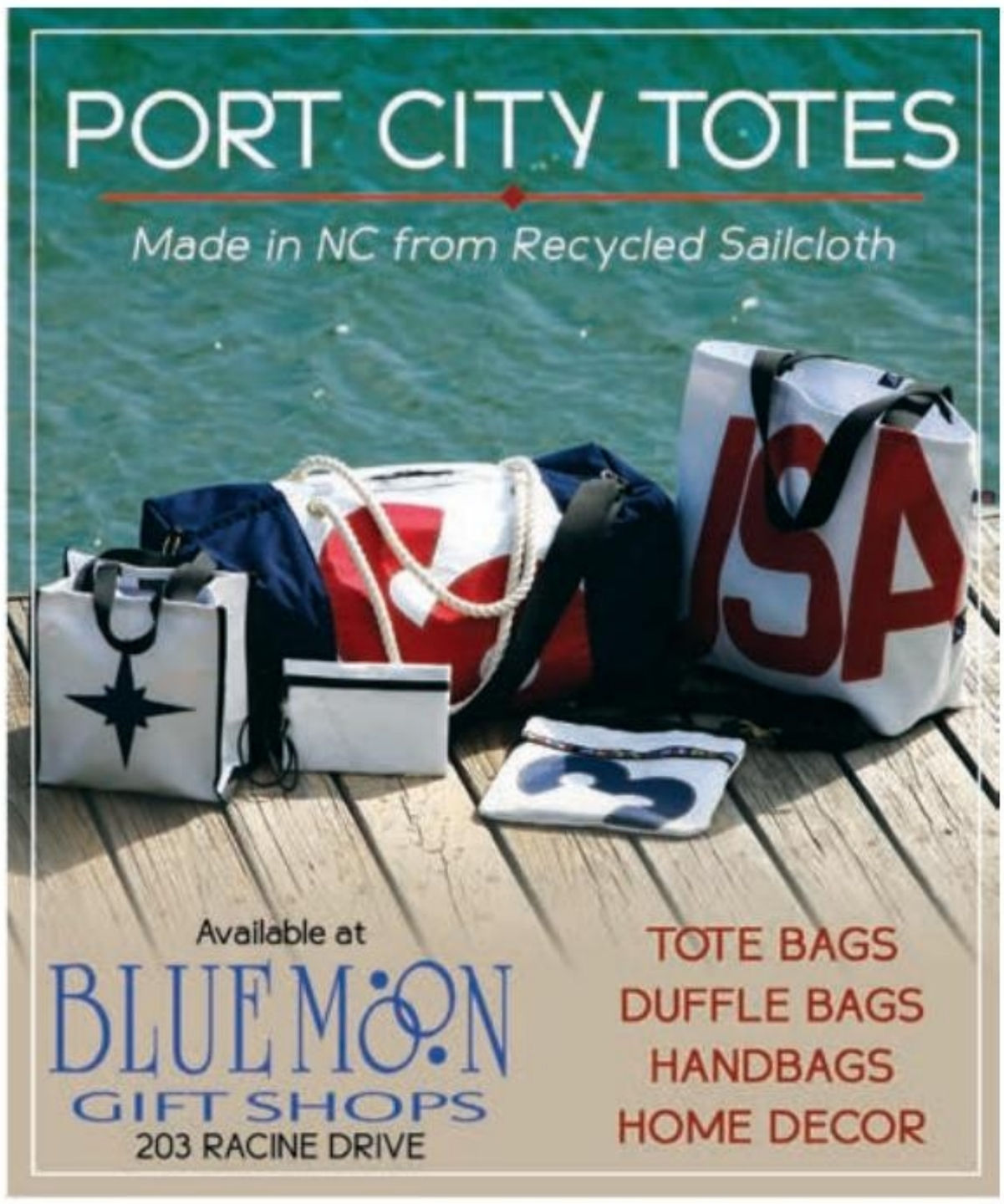
The judge halted the proceedings and sent everyone home to rest and cool off. At last check, the jury was still out. But stay tuned for the blockbuster movie.

Across the Channel in France, meanwhile, where dozens of meteorological records suffered heat stroke due to weeks of three-digit temperatures, maps of the country's hottest zones at one point eerily resembled a human skull, reminding some of Edvard Munch's painting *The Scream*.

As you may have guessed by now, I'm no fan of summer. Perhaps this is because I am a child of winter, reportedly born in the midst of a snowstorm. Or possibly it's because I lived on the coast of Maine for more than two decades and grew accustomed to summers that are short but cool affairs, ruining me for increasingly hot Southern summers.

Curiously, when I think back on my boyhood — a kid growing up in three different small towns of the deep South — summer heat never seemed to get under my collar the way it does now.

In Mississippi, a beautiful state beach lay just across the highway from our house. There was always an evening breeze off the water,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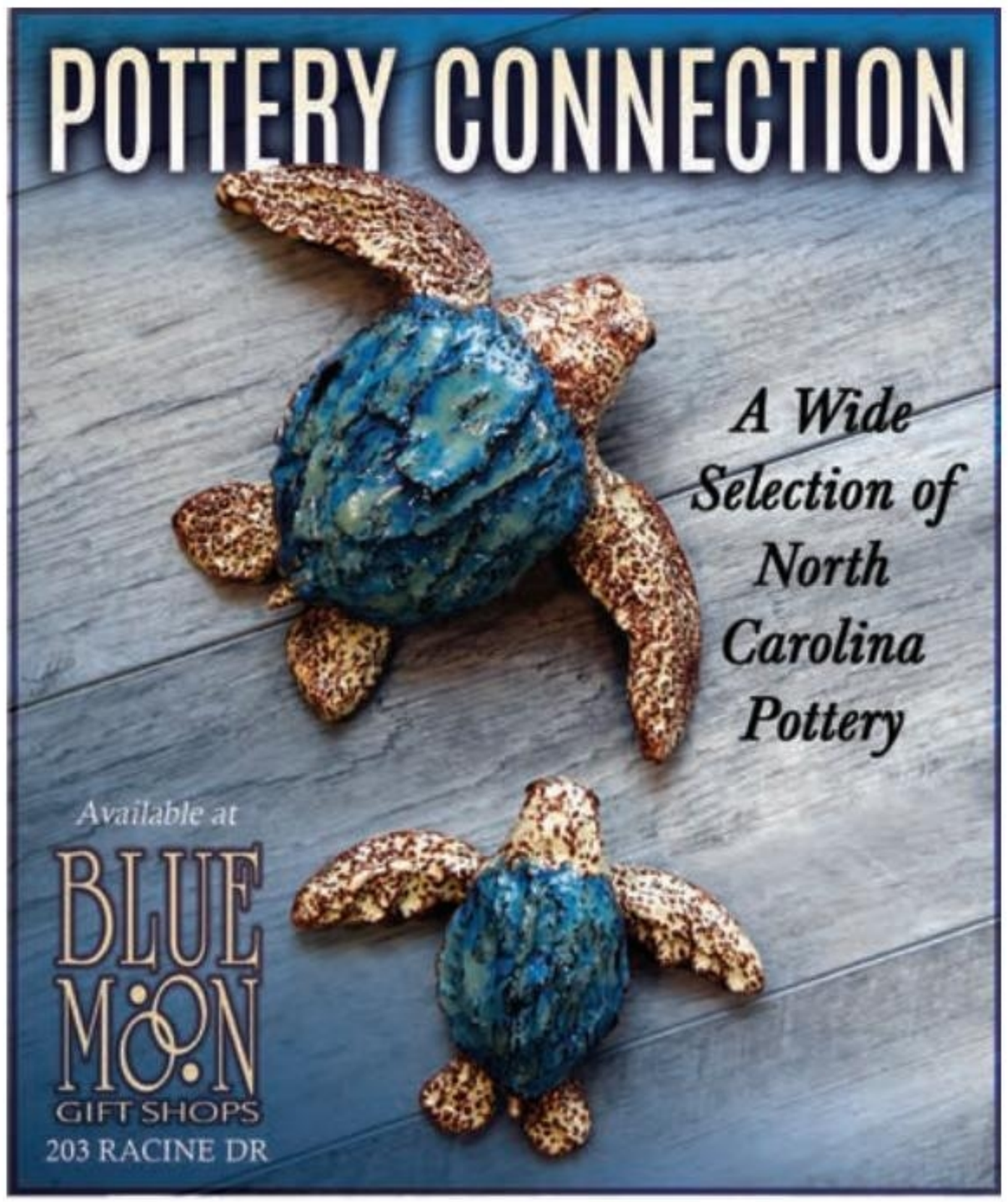
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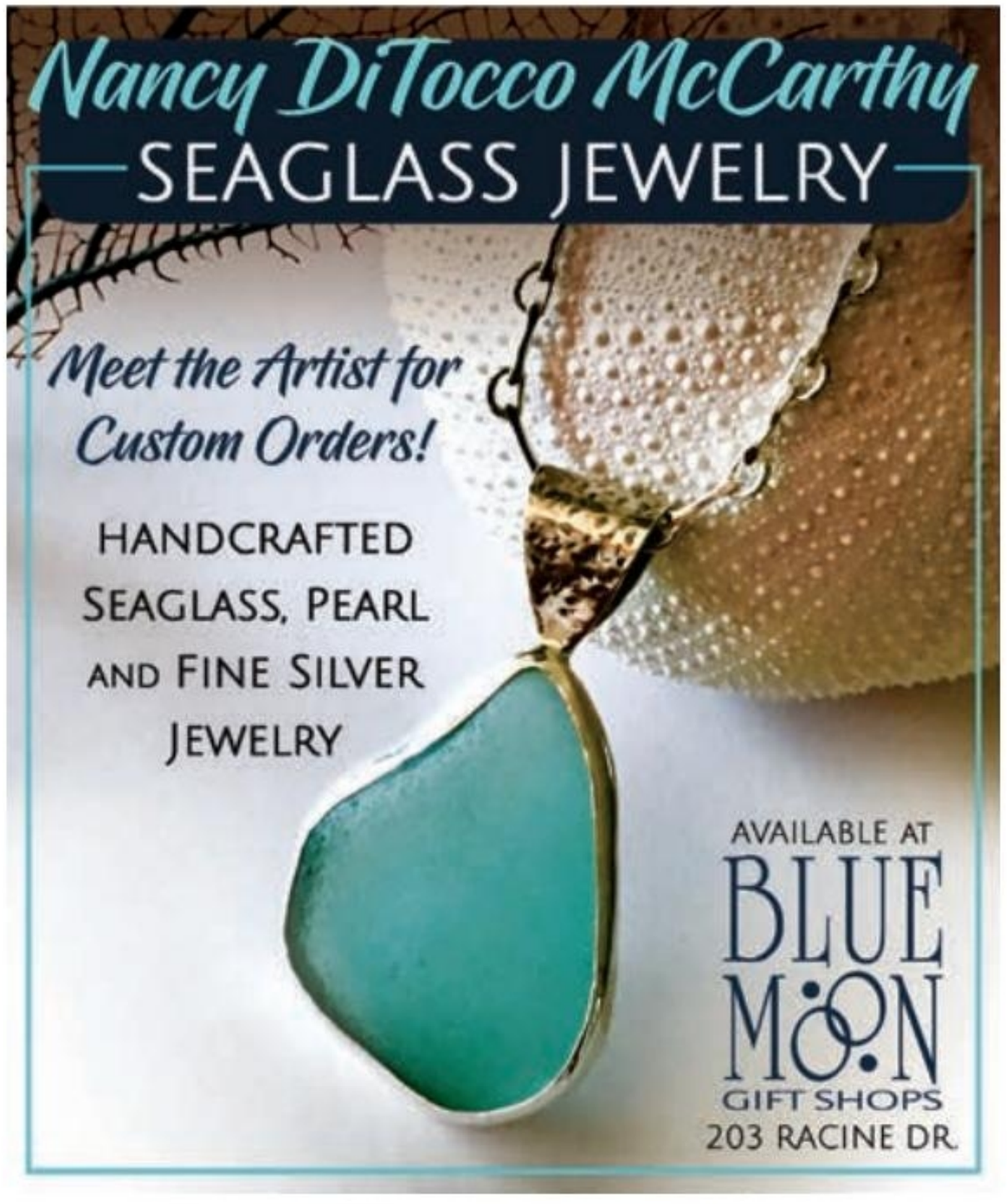
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and my mother and I used to go there in late afternoon to wade in the tranquil surf of the Gulf of Mexico to hunt for interesting wash-ups. Someone at the weekly newspaper my father owned told me that the Gulf offered the widest variety of shells in the world, an idea that inspired me to mount dozens of beautiful sea shells — striped turbans, Scotch bonnets, false angel wings — on a pair of lacquered pine boards.

The pressman at the newspaper also informed me that we lived in the heart of "Hurricane Alley," which prompted me to begin watching for signs of gathering thunderstorms that boiled up far out over the Gulf and swept ashore with curtains of wind and rain. Secretly, I confess, I hoped a real hurricane might blow ashore, having no clue what might have resulted. A few years ago, the town where we lived was almost erased from the map by just such a September storm.

The next stop in our family odyssey was a small South Carolina town that could have been the setting for *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Save for a beautiful African-American lady named Jesse who nursed my mom back to health after a pair of late-term miscarriages and taught me to "feet dance" to the gospel music she played from a transistor radio in the open kitchen window, my long summer days were spent either in a wicker chair on a wide side porch reading my first chapter books or — like smart dogs across the sultry South — burrowing into the cool dirt beneath the house, where I played for hours with my painted Greek and Roman soldiers.

The days I liked best were those soothing gray affairs when a soft, steady rain fell all day and into the night, refreshing a parched world with its soothing music. Today, whenever I see the TV spot for the popular Calm app — featuring a full minute of nothing but gentle rain dripping from leaves — I'm reminded of something Miss Jesse liked to say. "Slow rain is a gift, child. This tired old world is like new after a good rain."

In Wilmington, the next stop on our Magical Mystery Tour of Southern newspapers, we joined the Hanover Seaside Club on Wrightsville Beach, where after a long day on the searing beach I liked to sit in a big rocking chair on the club's open-air porches, slugging down ginger ale as I eavesdropped on grown-up cocktail chatter about politics and weather. On at least two occasions a hurricane was in the vicinity.

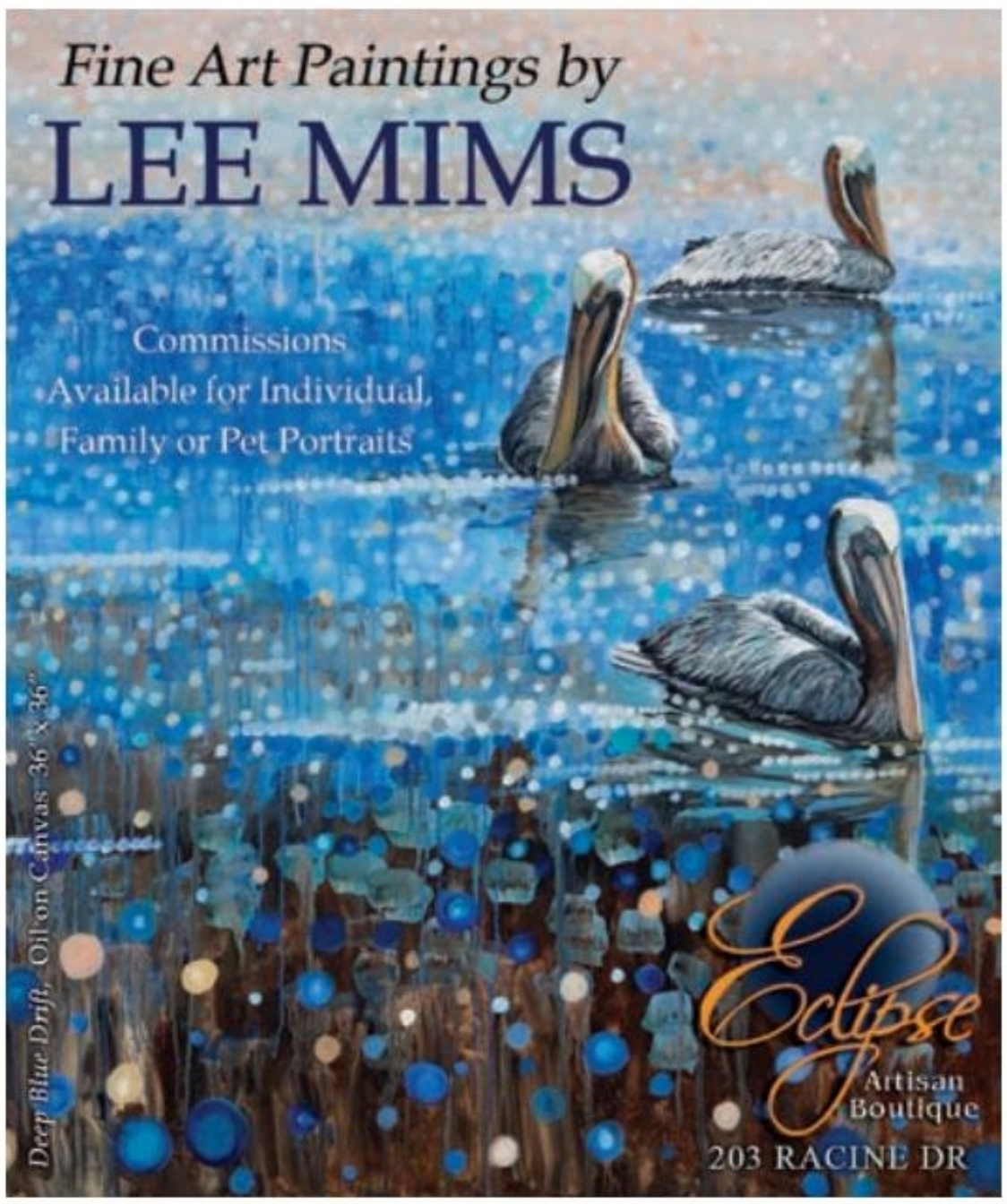
Small people have big ears, as my mother liked to remind my father at such times. But I remember a few of his corny summer heat jokes to this day.

It was so hot today I saw a dog chasing a cat and they both were walking.

Did you hear? It was so hot today, why, the chickens were laying omelets and cows were giving powdered milk.

These days, of course, owing to global warming, rising seas and other factors, ordinary thunderstorms seem more menacing than ever, and hurricanes have become even more lethel.

Last September the citizens of Wilmington were marooned by



a lady named Florence that dumped catastrophic amounts of rain on the coastal Carolina region, killing 51 people and doing a record amount of damage to property.

A month later, tropical storm Michael turned into the most powerful hurricane ever to hit the Florida panhandle, obliterating Mexico Beach and adjacent communities before churning up through the Carolinas and knocking over record numbers of trees and power lines across the Piedmont. Four huge oaks went down on our street alone, which left us in the dark for over a week. At least two of our neighbors' houses were severely damaged, but thankfully nobody was killed or injured.

In Michael's wake, however, tree crews began combing the neighborhood, playing on people's fears as they went door to door.

For the moment at least, we are willing to accept the risk of living in an urban forest beneath stately century-old white oaks, if only for the kindness of shade they offer in summer and cathedral-like beauty they present come fall.

Besides, at the start of the summer just ending, I made my wife smile by claiming that I was going to fully embrace the heat of *this* summer the way I did as a boy — with grace and a true sense of wonder, and absolutely no grumbling about the horrible heat.

"Oh, nice. Are you planning to spend the summer in Sweden?" came the cheeky reply

I suppose she knows me all too well. For a while, at least, I gamely managed to live up to this impossible goal, as abundant rain in May and half of June made my garden flourish and the staff gardener smile.

Then came July and someone thoughtlessly turned off the great spigot in the sky — turning yours truly into Edvard Munch's *Scream*.

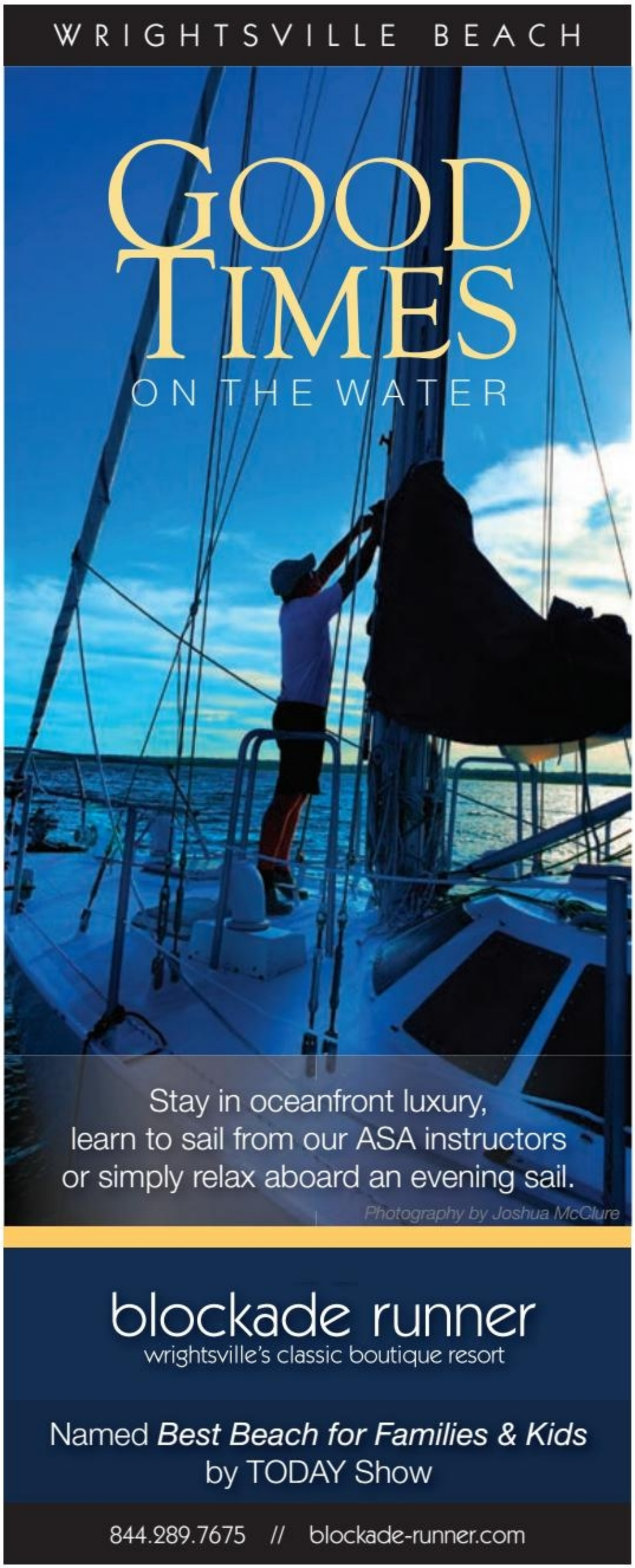
Despite heavy watering by hand — city water is no match for the kind that comes from the clouds — my garden withered during a solid month of relentless 90-plus days of heat and sunshine. Every little pop-up thunderstorm on my weather radar app, alas, seemed to just miss our little patch of earth, a personal affront that soon had me swearing an oath that next summer, "Stockholm here I come!" One afternoon when I least expected it, burrowed away in my air-conditioned tree-house office, my wife phoned to report that a cold front was bringing a series of thunderstorms our way.

I told her that I would believe it when I smelled it.

Not 10 minutes later, I heard the thunder and stepped outside.

Ten minutes after that it was raining gloriously. I actually stepped out into my garden with my arms outstretched, savoring the smell and feel of summer-ending rain like the character Andy Dufresne in *The Shawshank Redemption* who, after he finds his way to freedom by crawling through a prison sewer pipe to a rain-swollen creek, strips off his clothes and stretches out his arms to embrace the water of heaven. I've watched that movie half a dozen times and never fail to find that scene deeply moving, a metaphor for the power of love and a tired old world washed clean.

Contact Editor Jim Dodson at jim@thepilot.com.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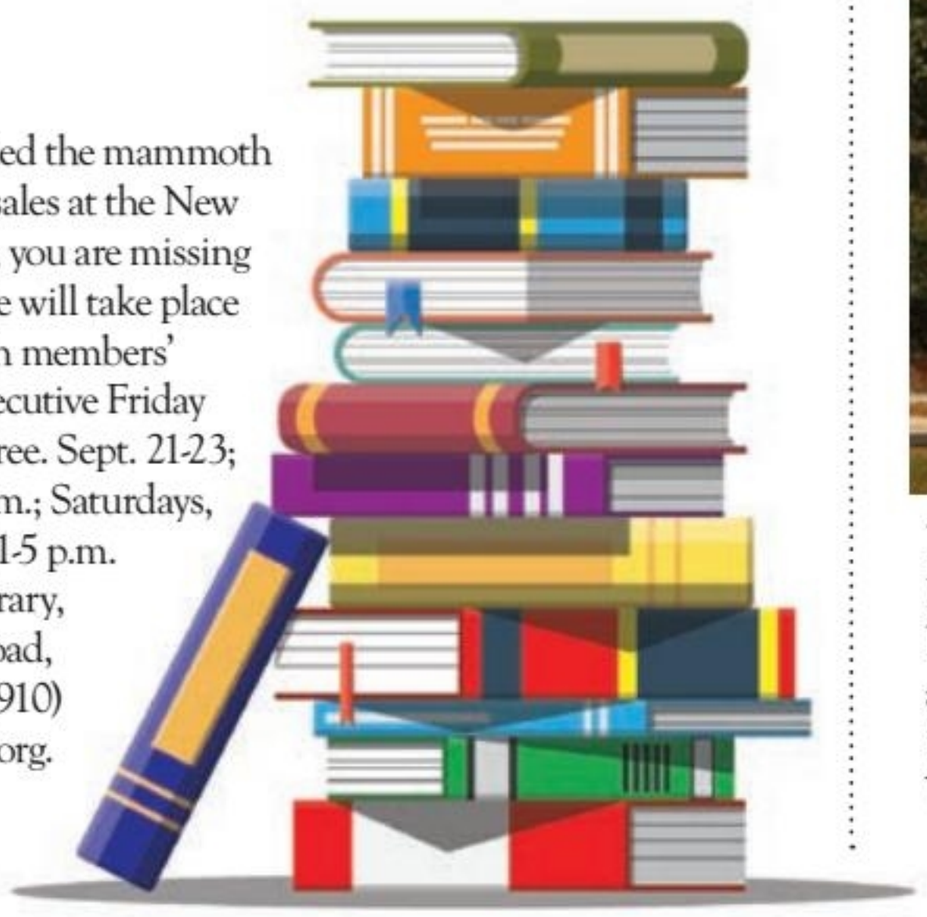
Feel the GLOW

The Girls Leadership Academy of Wilmington (GLOW) has a stunning new home, and it's time to celebrate! Join celebrity chefs Emeril Lagasse, Guy Fieri and Robert Irvine for an evening of cocktails and small plates to salute the grand opening of GLOW's new campus. Tickets: $250. Sept. 5, 5-10 p.m. GLOW Academy, 4100 Sunglow Drive, Wilmington. For info: (910) 338-5258.

Calling All Bibliophiles

If you have never attended the mammoth semiannual used-book sales at the New Hanover Public Library, you are missing out. This month the sale will take place over two weekends, with members' preview events on consecutive Friday evenings. Admission: Free. Sept. 21-23; 27-29. Fridays, 5:30-9 p.m.; Saturdays, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.; Sundays, 1-5 p.m. Northeast Regional Library, 1241 Military Cutoff Road, Wilmington. For info: (910) 798-6371 or nhclibrary.org.



Party, Party, Party . . .

Sept. 7 offers a variety of celebrations — why not attend all three?

Low Country Boil — The North Carolina Coastal Federation works to protect our coastal ecosystem. This year the group hosts its Low Country Boil at the Hanover Seaside Club with fine local shrimp, live music and a coastal-themed silent auction. Tickets: $50-$60. 4 p.m. - 7 p.m. Hanover Seaside Club, 601 S. Lumina Ave., Wrightsville Beach. For info: (910) 509-2838 or nccoast.org.

The Arty Party — This benefit for the Arts Council of Wilmington/New Hanover County will feature performances, artwork, food and drinks. Tickets: $100. 6 - 9 p.m. KGB-ILM, 19 Princess St., Wilmington. For info: (910) 343-0998 or artscouncilofwilmington.org.

Bellamy Birthday Bash — It's the Bellamy Mansion Museum's 25th anniversary, and there will be a delicious birthday barbecue, yard games, music and dancing as well as a silent auction and birthday cake. Tickets: $40-$50. 7-10 p.m. Bellamy Mansion Museum, 503 Market St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 251-3700 or bellamymansion.org.

September Swims

Serious swimmers, take note: September is a great time to hit the beach for a trio of competitive swimming events. A portion of the proceeds from these races benefits the North Carolina Coastal Federation.

Annual Pier-2-Pier Swim Race — An annual contest that spans the 1.7-mile distance between Johnnie Mercer's Pier and Crystal Pier. Sept. 14, 9 a.m. Johnnie Mercer's Pier, 23 E. Salisbury St., Wrightsville Beach. For info and registration: (910) 256-2743 or runsignup.com/Race/NC/WrightsvilleBeach/PiertoPier.

Swim the Loop and Mott's Channel Sprint — The Dockside Restaurant and Marina is the finishing point for this pair of swim races. Swim the Loop (3.5 miles) will begin at high tide and is a clockwise swim around Harbor Island. Motts Channel Spring starts at the Blockade Runner Resort. Admission: $45-$90. Sept. 29, 8-11 a.m. Dockside Restaurant and Marina, 1308 Airlie Road, Wrightsville Beach. For info: (910) 256-2752 or runsignup.com/Race/NC/Wilmington/SwimtheLoop.

Maze Craze

Are you ready for a family day in the country? Galloway Farm in Hallsboro hosts its annual Maze Craze, with a cornucopia of attractions that are hard to resist. Among them: duck races, horse hoops, hay and barrel train rides, pedal carts, a scavenger hunt, corn hole, and a variety of mazes. Tickets: $10. Sept. 21-22. Saturday, 11 a.m.-9 p.m.; Sunday, 1-8 p.m. Galloway Farm, 372 Artesia Road, Hallsboro. For info: ncmazecraze.com.

Dragon Boat Regatta

Dragon boat racing has been part of Chinese culture for more than 2,500 years. The annual Carolina Beach Dragon Boat Regatta and Festival will take place along the shores of the Carolina Beach Yacht Basin. Interested in putting together a team? Gather a group of friends and neighbors.You will need 20 people altogether, but the competition is open to all, regardless of age, gender or ability. Proceeds benefit Step Up for Soldiers, which recognizes the challenges of recently disabled veterans. Tickets: Free for spectators. Sept. 20-21. Carolina Beach Yacht Basin and Marina, 216 Canal Drive, Carolina Beach. For info and registration: carolinabeachdragonboat.com.

Fashion for a Cause

The I Am Beautiful Fashion Show, a benefit evening for the Miracle League and the Cape Fear Enrichment Program, features models with disabilities as well as music and dance performances and a raffle. Admission: Free. Sept. 14, 6 p.m. Pine Valley United Methodist Church, 3788 Shipyard Blvd., Wilmington. For info: pvumc.net.

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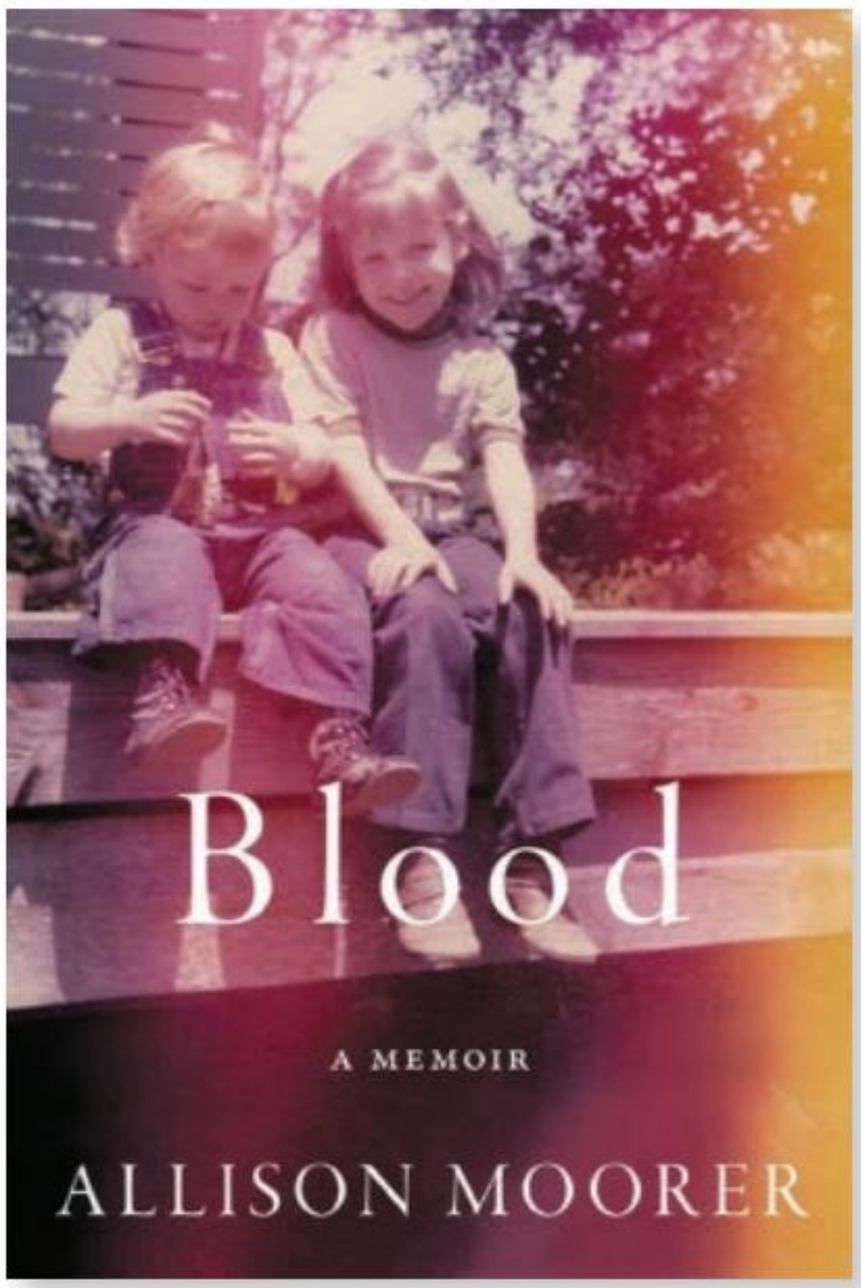
A Haunting Tune

A country music star's harrowing memoir



By Stephen E. Smith

If a memoirist's job is to make sense of the raw, shifting facts of the past in order to instruct the future, country music singer-songwriter Allison Moorer, best known for having composed and performed the Academy Award-nominated "A Soft Place To Fall," has a new calling. Her first literary publication, *Blood*, has the potential to change lives for the better.

This sometimes poetic but more often bitter memoir is no sob story about the hardships of being a celebrity. It's about the brutal, cold facts of real life. On an August morning in 1986, Moorer, who was 14 at the time, had her world upended when her abusive alcoholic father murdered her mother and then committed suicide in the front yard of their home in Mobile, Alabama.

The expected response to such an intensely traumatic experience might be to distance oneself from these horrifying memories, and Moorer's older sister, Grammy-winning singer-songwriter Shelby Lynne, has downplayed this life-altering event by fending off interviewers' constant questions, claiming to have come to terms with the family ghosts. Moorer has chosen to directly confront the past, and she begins her memoir with a detailed recounting of the murder-suicide.

Although her recollection is sometimes sketchy and often confused by the fact that she was awakened by the gunshots that took her parents' lives, she relentlessly investigates, ruminating on forensic reports, death records, and by interviewing relatives and friends. Much of what she writes is suggested by personal items and family mementos — photographs, random notes penned by her father, his

song lyrics, a coffee cup and keepsakes such as her mother's ring, which she wears always, and her father's Gibson guitar, which she continues to play in recording sessions. These items are talismans which Moorer employs to reveal, bit by bit, the terrible events of her childhood, and to demystify the details of the murder/suicide in order to assuage the grief and guilt surrounding her mother's final moments.

"I hope she didn't hear me call for her," she writes. "If I were shot in the chest and in the process of bleeding out in my front yard and heard my child call for me from the side door of the house, I can't imagine I would die peacefully. The idea that Mama might've known I was looking for her haunts me. The idea that she might've died hearing me call for her, that my voice might've been the last thing she heard and that might've served as a terrible torment for her last conscious seconds, brings me indescribable sadness."

Old photographs foreshadow the tragedy. A 1975 snapshot taken in a chicken coop outside the family home suggests that her mother's despondency was present early in her marriage. Her posture seems to indicate that clinical depression had "grabbed her around the throat and started slowly choking the life out of her . . . She just looks sad. Resigned. Older than thirty-one."

In a photo taken in Nashville 10 years later, Moorer detects the same forlorn look as her mother stands beside a display case filled with antique rifles: ". . . the look of 'I wish I could disappear'" is even more obvious.

Moorer doesn't employ the customary chronological structure for her storytelling. Chapters jump from one disconnected episode to another, and short lyrical passages are interspersed with the narrative, mimicking the pattern of obsession the author experiences.

"There are things that require no recalling," Moorer writes. "They are here in the morning, they are here in the evening, they are here in my chest. They are knocked loose and into my mind by a stack of magazines on the floor beside my reading spot, the crossword puzzle in the newspaper, the color

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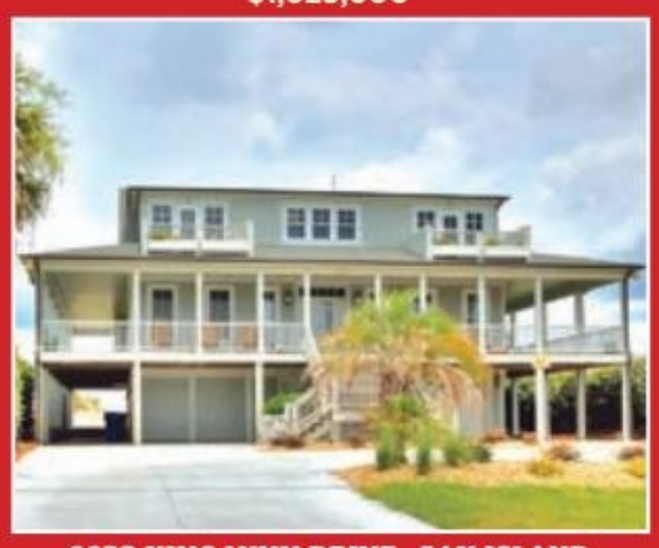

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of an eggplant, the smell of morning on a work coat . . . " Still, the narrative progresses in a timely and engrossing fashion, and the final effect is to bring the depth and detail of the story into full, horrifying focus.

Blood is a memoir of despair, the story of a family tiptoeing around unpredictable behavior, drunken abuse and needless cruelty, all of which might have been avoided if Moorer's father had received treatment for alcohol abuse and depression. She acknowledges his alcoholism but doesn't offer it as an excuse for his behavior. And she can only wonder about his mental state: "Was he bipolar? I know he was depressed. He was unpredictable. He did dangerous things. I'm pretty certain he didn't care if he lived or died."

She speculates that he may have been schizophrenic or suffered a personality disorder, but her judgment is necessarily simplistic and straightforward. Her father was "mad about what he didn't do with his life" — which is, of course, a common affliction in a society that touts unobtainable goals. Alcohol abuse and mental illness remain constants in American life; the CDC reported more than 47,000 suicides in 2017.

The value of Moorer's memoir is twofold. First, it is an unburdening, a release for the writer. Committing her past to paper has no doubt forced Moorer to confront her demons and relegated them to a permanent and peaceful place in her life. More important, her storytelling may act as a wake-up call for those who live with physical and emotional abuse, a signal for victims to get out of dangerous relationships — and perhaps the memoir will serve as an eye-opener for those caught in the grip of alcoholism and mental illness, encouraging them to seek treatment, which would be no small accomplishment in a culture plagued by despair, anger and violence.

Stephen E. Smith is a retired professor and the author of seven books of poetry and prose. He's the recipient of the Poetry Northwest Young Poet's Prize, the Zoe Kincaid Brockman Prize for poetry and four North Carolina Press awards.

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Coffee with Conscience

Best-selling novelist Amy Reed on Asheville writers, young adult books and the challenge of living one's values

By Wiley Cash · Photographs by Mallory Cash

There are countless humiliations specifically reserved for writers, from online reviews — *Book arrived late. One-star* — to empty chairs in the audience at a reading to sitting beside someone on an airplane who, after asking you what you do for a living, tells you he or she has never heard of you or your books.

One rarely discussed humiliation is the signing line. Signing lines can be lonely places for authors, especially during literary festivals when a much better known and beloved writer is signing hundreds of books at the table beside yours. Once, at a book festival in Nashville, Tennessee, I signed — which is to say I *did not sign* — books beside Bill Bryson. I also *did not sign* books beside Sue Monk Kidd at a literary festival in Florida. Last year, at the Doris Betts Spring Literary Festival in Statesville, North Carolina, I *did not sign* books beside novelist Amy Reed.

In early August, Amy and I sat down over coffee at Odd's Café on Haywood Road in West Asheville, North Carolina, and I reminded her of our time together signing (and *not signing*) books at the festival in Statesville. Amy moved to Asheville from Seattle years ago, and she regularly writes at Odd's Café, which, like most things in West Asheville, is odd. A few years back, the slogan "Keep Asheville Weird" appeared, and while Asheville as a whole has gotten less weird over the ensuing decade, West Asheville has maintained the city's weirdness, its penchant for the arts, and an open invitation to artists of all kinds.

A stroll down Haywood Road in the heart of West Asheville reveals gorgeous murals painted on the sides of independent bookstores, coffee shops and hipster consignment stores. I feel more at home in West Asheville than I do in just about any other place in the country, and Amy Reed might just agree. Our conversation quickly turns to the city's writing community.

"There are so many amazing writers here, especially young adult writers," she says. She takes a sip of her coffee and gazes out at Haywood Road, where people pass in cars and on foot. The names of the local writers she rattles off next are a virtual Who's Who of national and international bestsellers: "Alan Gratz, Alexandra Duncan, Stephanie Perkins, Beth Revis, and Jaye Robin Brown are just a few. Asheville's writing community is so welcoming. Writing is a solitary profession, so it's great when you're able to connect with another writer."

It is not just her colleagues in the local YA community that Amy has connected with. I remind her of the string of young people who waited in line to have their books signed at the literary festival in

Statesville. Most of them were clutching a copy of her novel *The Girls of Nowhere*, which tells the story of three high school girls in Oregon who band together to fight back against misogyny and abuse at their high school, an act that transforms not only the students and their teachers, but their entire town.

I ask her why she thinks *The Girls of Nowhere* resonates with so many young people. "There's just something universal about the teen experience," she says. "When we're teens we're the most vulnerable and raw, and the stakes are so high. Teens want to read about themselves and their problems, and sometimes adults want to remember the teenagers they were."

I agree. There is value in finding yourself on the page, and you can always return to the books you loved as a teen and find yourself there, which may explain adults' sustained love for books like *The Outsiders*, *Catcher in the Rye*, and *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*.

I ask Amy what kind of reader she was as a teenager growing up in Seattle. She laughs and rolls her eyes. "I loved Anne Sexton and Sylvia Plath," she says. "It was Seattle in the '90s. Grunge was everywhere, but I was into female singer/songwriters. I was emo before emo was a thing. I was that girl."

My two daughters, ages 4 and 3, are sitting at a table beside us, playing quietly. I confide to Amy that I consider my own books as time capsules that my daughters can read to discover who I was and what was important to me. I ask her if she thinks of her own books that way, as breadcrumbs she is leaving behind for her 6-year-old daughter so that she can know what her mother believed to be important and true.

"I do," she says. "I try to live in a way that mirrors my values, especially now that I have a daughter. She was raised understanding that women and girls are strong and independent. I think she will find that in my books."

Amy's new novel, *The Boy and Girl Who Broke the World*, tells the emotional and humorous story of two young outcasts — an optimistic boy named Billy and a cynical girl named Lydia — whose bond may just save the world just as the world seems to be ending. Despite its surreal plotline, which involves a narcissistic rock star and a war between unicorns and dragons, the book is a lesson in honesty and vulnerability.

Apparently, writing about the apocalypse interested Amy enough to imagine a dystopian America in her next novel, which she describes as a near future gender-swapped, feminist retelling of *The Great Gatsby* set on an island off the coast of Seattle. "It's very weird and dark and twisty," she says. "In the novel, the world is falling apart, but the girl at the center of the book is able to find her own power."

I'll read it, and, once they are old enough, I'll want my daughters to read it, too.

Wiley Cash lives in Wilmington with his wife and their two daughters. His latest novel, The Last Ballad, *is available wherever books are sold.*

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Anything with a Past

Beth Rutledge's passion for saving and preserving Wilmington's old buildings

By Dana Sachs

Beth Rutledge: Executive Director, Historic Wilmington Foundation

How would you describe your job?
I carry on a long tradition of protecting and preserving old buildings.

What does that mean on a daily basis?
It can mean anything on any given day. It can mean bigger advocacy efforts. It can mean answering questions for someone who walks into our office. It can mean relocating a building. Last winter we moved a little bungalow from 310 Bladen St. after the owner, to his credit, donated it to us on the condition that it be relocated. So, it's really big things, like moving a building, which we don't do very often. It's small things, like being able to talk to people about their wood windows.

How did you become interested in historic preservation?
I was born this way. I have always loved old buildings — old things, vintage clothes, anything with a past. When I realized that old buildings weren't just here by accident, that was when I started becoming more active in historic preservation.

One of the biggest controversies in Wilmington these days concerns two older buildings downtown: the former Belk Beery department store, which now serves as the county's main library; and the Borst Building. The county is considering demolishing them and developing a new public-private partnership called Project Grace, which would include housing, a relocated Cape Fear Museum and a new library. What's HWF's position on Project Grace?
We are not against developing the parcel. Our main concern is that they keep those two buildings as part of their development. The Borst Building was built in 1926 as Wilmington's first Chrysler dealership. That area on Second Street used to be called Automobile Row. What's really significant is that Chrysler started in 1924, and two years later, where did they want a dealership? Wilmington. Think about that. The fact that they expanded to Wilmington is fairly significant, and speaks to the activity that was happening then.

As for the Belk Beery Building, it's a shining example of adaptive reuse. The county made it into a library in the early 1980s. But it's also significant as the last existing department store downtown. It's an echo and a memory of what was there, and it's successfully being reused now.

The Historic Wilmington Foundation just published its annual list of Most Threatened Places, and that list includes both the Borst Building and the Belk Beery Building. What other buildings made this year's list?
One of our most threatened places is the Reaves Chapel in Navassa. The North Carolina Coastal Land Trust recently purchased it, and we are partnering with them to help preserve the building. It's on our list because there are still a lot of moving parts that need to come together for the building to actually be saved. Partnerships like that are what I hope HWF will do more of. When we join forces, we are stronger.

How do you respond to the criticism that HWF is averse to change?
There is nothing in this town to support that argument. If that were proving true, we would all be living in buildings from the 1600s or 1700s. That question — "Are you just going to save everything?" — well, look around. Clearly not. But if a building is

PHOTOGRAPH BY MARK STEELMAN

viable and usable, why isn't it preferable to use what's already here? It's ecologically sound. It's environmentally sound. It's an economically great decision. There are two old buildings on the Project Grace parcel. Why is it preferable to put those two buildings in a landfill if we don't have to? The National Trust for Historic Preservation has a principle they call "Re-Urbanism." Adaptive reuse is the default, demolition the last resort.

You talked about the value of preservation in terms of economics and environmentalism, but how would you advocate for preservation with someone who really values what's new?

OK. It's going to sound like I'm avoiding the question, but I promise I'm not. I'm just going to meander a little bit. Tom Mayes is the general counsel at the National Trust and author of the book *Why Old Places Matter: How Historic Places Affect Our Identity and Well-Being*. He's going to be the keynote speaker at our annual luncheon on November 21. The book talks about why old places matter. He uses words like "continuity," "memory," "architecture," "creativity," "learning," "community," "economics." That's just it in a nutshell. People don't come to Wilmington to shop in the big box stores. They come because what we have here is extraordinary and unique.

What are your favorite buildings in the city?

I have so many. I have a couple downtown that I really love. The Huggins Building on Market Street. The Bonitz Building on Princess. And the old Bullock Hospital Building on North Front. These are all commercial buildings. They're all being used. These buildings make me happy. Every time I walk past one of them, I point it out to my husband as if it's the first time I've seen it and I go, "Oh my God, I love that building."

It's encouraging to hear that there are so many positive preservation stories in this town.

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considering how small our city is.

Can you name some historic districts we might not even know about?
Westbrook-Ardmore, which is bounded, roughly, by Dock Street to the north, Queen Street to the south and between South 14th and Wrightsville Avenue. It includes bungalows and Colonial Revival houses. Also, our smallest historic district is on Market Street, right past 17th, where the mansions are. There's, like, four of them. That's our smallest.

How can people who live in old houses maintain them without spending too much money?
Legacy Architectural Salvage. We opened it four years ago. Part of our mission is preserving and protecting irreplaceable historic resources of Wilmington and the Cape Fear. A historic resource is not just a building. It's also an old window. A piece of flooring. A piece of trim. We realized that having an architectural salvage arm was a way to help people be great stewards of their homes. We're keeping pieces and parts out of the landfill and we're allowing them to continue being used.

In your eyes, what is the great value of historic preservation?
Historic preservation is not just "Washington slept here." This is about making use of our built history. The way that old buildings are constructed proves how they were built to last. They were built with incredibly dense, strong wood. So you can feel the difference in a beam from a house built in the 1920s using wood that was probably 200 years old. You always hear that saying, "They don't make them like they used to." They can't!

I know not everyone feels the way I do. There was an old brick building on Castle Street, the Jaffe Building. It was just a shell, but that building was like, "Look at me, I'm still here." Then she came down during Hurricane Florence. That was wrenching. I got teary.

Dana Sachs' latest novel, The Secret of the Nightingale Palace, *is available at bookstores, online and throughout Wilmington.*

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The Lord of the Mosh Pit

Spencer Compton happens upon the first family of Cape Fear rock and roll

You didn't know that I, Lord Wilmington, have applied my manicured fingers to many musical instruments. It's not in the thin and mean gruel of my available history, but let me assure you that I was an absolute brute on the lute and a violinist of the first order. When I chose to seat my silken figure at the Kit-Cat Club's piano in London, the incessant smoke-wreathed political chatter would cease in profound anticipation.

My wonder of a mother, Mary Noel, insisted that "a man without music will never be in tune with the world." Our vast and moated Compton Wynyates estate was filled with instruments and, at key times, England's finest instructors. Verily, my musical talent was what first drew King George's attention to my tall and willowy self. That friendship would change the history of the British empire during the late 1600s to the mid-1700s and lead my protege, Gabriel Johnston, to name this town after me.

And thankfully, this Wilmington is delightfully musical! Of course I've seen nearly every show at the royal Thalian Hall and savored a variety of styles at the Cameron Art Museum — including rap and hip-hop. Blues, of course, at the Rusty Nail, bluegrass at the Satellite and, at the Duck N' Dive and the Goat & Compass (among other locales), dusty folk and "Americana."

I have savored a wide variety of rock and roll and dance music during my nightly walks downtown. There are also several interesting and accomplished street musicians (although one certainly needs his instrument confiscated). I have heard, numerous times, Wilmington's piano man as well as its heartbeat musician, Randy McQuay.

But to my surprise — and the delight of my rugged landlord — I have found that my most favorite local musicians — and local music is what I love best — are playing the heaviest and toughest kind of music. Me, the gentlest and best-dressed of Britain's aristocracy who never allowed sweat to streak my face powder —a hard-rocker! "You, Spencer Compton, have become a headbanger," observed Marcus, owner of my Queen Street digs, with a burst of laughter. It was he who loaned me a Harley-Davidson motorcycle and taught me to ride and love it. That machine's distinctive rumbling voice, I suspect, first nudged me toward music with a similar timbre.

He took me to see the amazingly active Madd Hatters perform a sweat-drenched show that really opened my eyes. Horn players in short dresses, growling, jangly guitars, an acrobatic bassist, a gargoyle screamer, all driven mad by a beast upon the drums. Their sticker now graces my motorcycle. Then we saw the local "hardcore" band, Down In It. After watching open-mouthed at the wild energy in the so-called "mosh pit" unleashed by this primitive music, I understood how Marcus got his nose broken during a Down In It show at Red Dogs on Wrightsville Beach. This band should lead an infantry invasion.

It is strange to admit that I, Lord Wilmington — who rarely wielded the gavel during my many years as speaker of the House of Commons because it made too much racket — was sorely tempted to dive off the stage into the writhing crowd!

Marcus also introduced me to Reggie's on 42nd Street, a club that quickly became my favorite destination to experience this more untamed variety of music. It was there I first saw Johnny and Angela Yeagher perform together in their exquisite punk band, the Zodiac Panthers, the musical equivalent of riding a stripped-down Harley. I have seen them many times since in other places, both as the Zodiac Panthers — Johnny on guitar and vocals, and Angela on drums — and as Ironhead, with Angela switching to bass beside Johnny.

This happily and busily married couple are, in my estimation, the First Family of Rock and Roll in Wilmington. They are punk rock royalty, which is why I've inked my quill to tell you this story about love and music.

"We do everything together," Johnny said while we relaxed in their homey and punky hair salon and record store attached to Reggie's. "We enjoy all the same things: play music, do hair, buy records."

"I don't know how we would do it any other way," added Angela, who also books the shows at Reggie's.

This is one of Wilmington's sweet spots. Elderly ladies getting their hair washed and rolled sit next to — and chat with — youngsters getting their hair fashion-colored like unicorns and rainbows, a specialty at Angie's Records and Hair. The aroma of hair products blends with

BOTTOM PHOTOGRAPH BY BRUCE ALLEYCAT

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the aura of a couple who have toured regularly and widely as successful punk musicians and songwriters.

It's a place that inspires, much like my house in London that drew young politicians yearning to learn about leading with style. One of the youths who began hanging out and learning at this salon when he was a little skateboard kid, J.P. Verardi, has grown up to lead the popular local punk band The Girls.

"People ask me, 'When's your kid playing again?'" Johnny said with one of his distinctive smiles. He's got the punk rock look, I've learned. And it's not just the black-on-black hair, leather jacket and Converse sneakers.

Punk has been his life for much of his 42 years. He grew up in Piscataway, New Jersey, the son of a rock-and-roll-loving biker – the real tough kind – and a mother who played folk music professionally. "I think I kind of ruined that when I came along," Johnny told me.

He was born with interesting hands. The little finger on his fretting hand is webbed, and his strumming hand is missing tiny bits. Two smaller fingers born as one had to be surgically split. Those singular fingers found an instant home on the guitar when his parents gave him one at age 10. He never let it go. "I was the guy sitting in my room, playing guitar," he told me.

By age 14 he was in a local heavy metal band, opening shows for international heavy acts. But he quickly found punk was more to his liking. It was just as heavy, but more direct, sort of like my pithy and profound utterances in Parliament, which were often decried by my foes – those callow fellows – as moronic and puerile.

"You're not hiding behind anything else. It's bare bones," Johnny explained of punk's allure. "It's honest – all about the songs." His original punk band, the Runarounds, became quite popular, and he found himself touring the eastern side of the Colonies.

Enter Angela, a bright and lively Winston-Salem girl with cosmetology and psychology degrees, and an absolute passion for rock music, particularly live music. She's also been playing since she was 14, first drums (which her parents pawned because she played them too loudly) and then guitar.

She was organizing shows at the Millennium Center in her hometown when,

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in 2001, she booked The Runarounds. "I loved his band. Motörhead, Ramones style. I thought they were so cool! They looked cool!" When she learned they needed a bassist, she tried out.

"They said no," Angela recalled. But Johnny asked her out. While they were dating, "I really wanted to be involved in it all," she says. She took bass lessons and practiced relentlessly. "I was super-determined."

Johnny's father was killed by a hit-and-run driver that year while riding. Their relationship deepened, and her bass playing finally made the grade. When they moved to Virginia Beach in 2003, The Runarounds became the popular Ironhead, and they toured the U.S., Europe and Scandinavia.

A friend thought they'd feel at home in Wilmington, so they moved here in 2010 and fell in love with the location and the worthy music scene. Wanting to simplify their act, they gave Ironhead a rest — they still do occasional shows — and formed Zodiac Panthers as a two-piece band, Johnny on guitar and singing with Angela driving on drums.

By the time they opened Angie's Records and Hair in 2015, they had added a bassist. They do shows regularly, mostly in the eastern U.S. "It's a lot of fun, no drama," Angela said.

"Super-short, catchy songs," Johnny added.

Being a lifelong bachelor, I couldn't help but feel skepticism about mixing a touring band, a business and a marriage. But every time I've seen Johnny and Angela together, they seem like the happiest people in the room. Their toughest arguments — and even those are mild and brief, Johnny said — have come when they're working on a new song and can't agree on an arrangement.

My beautiful mother always told me the gifts you receive in life come in direct proportion to your gratitude, and I can't remember meeting a more grateful couple. Each told me how they can hardly believe how beautifully their dreams have come together.

In conclusion, my loyal subjects, I have asked Angela to come up with a plan for my lengthy tresses and Johnny for guitar-slashing lessons. Who knows, some day soon you may see your Lord Spencer Compton onstage in Wilmington — maybe with rainbow hair atop a black leather jacket with brocade trim — playing his lute like a brute with these two royal punks. – *Spencer Compton*

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Jeff Spicoli Is Dead

A gentlemanly defense of the average surfer

By Fritts Causby

For those of you who don't know, Jeff Spicoli is the long-haired, continually dazed, Hawaiian-shirt-wearing, unmotivated surfer portrayed by Sean Penn in *Fast Times at Ridgemont High*. The film is a classic; it's hilarious and it will probably always be part of our culture, but it created a negative stereotype that is simply no longer relevant or true.

To be honest, it may be a bit premature to say that Jeff Spicoli is dead. This is because the word on the street and in the water is that the mayor of Wrightsville Beach wants to ban surfing altogether. After considering the number of negative images of surfers continually perpetuated by movies and TV shows, it would not be surprising to find out this is true.

One could scarcely blame an elected official for wanting to discourage surfers from visiting their town or taking part in the sport of surfing, if the stereotype were accurate. In reality, however, it is unfair, false and destructive to portray the average modern surfer as a washed-out, perpetually stoned Jeff Spicoli-type, who wants "nothing more than some tasty waves and a cool buzz."

Surfers no longer fit this profile. In fact, the average American surfer has a higher income level and a higher level of education than the general public. According to a recent report, "A Socioeconomic and Recreational Profile of Surfers in the United States," which was published by Surf-First and the Surfrider Foundation, the average surfer in the U.S. has a bachelor's degree or higher, earns $75,000 or more per year, and is around 34 years old.

The report also shows that, as a whole, surfers visit the beach around 100 times a year, spending approximately $66 per trip. This equates to a more than $36 million annual contribution from surfers to the coastal communities they visit.

In North Carolina, income levels and education are slightly lower than the average. An explanation for this could be that the cost of living in North Carolina is relatively low compared with more populated areas such as California and the Northeast. However, surfers in North Carolina spent more than those in many other areas, at an average of $111 per trip. Nearly 60 percent of surfers in North Carolina have a college education or higher, and nearly 75 percent are employed full-time, making an average of $50,000 per

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year. This places the economic impact of North Carolina surfing at more than $3 million per year—nothing to be sneezed at!

Still, almost any surfers with more than 10 years of experience can describe how they have felt marginalized, discriminated against or looked down upon by those who have no understanding or appreciation of the sport. It is easy to see why, and it is almost understandable, considering that surfers have long been portrayed as uneducated, unmotivated and unemployed.

After learning that these notions have no basis in fact, it becomes clear that many coastal management policies and attitudes should be reconsidered: Surfers bring much-needed funds into our coastal economy, and their interests should be taken into account. The numbers from the report unequivocally prove that surfers exert substantial economic impact. Attracting more surfers to coastal regions is a solid idea, especially if considered from an economic standpoint.

How to attract them? A network of artificial surfing reefs could be constructed, to fight coastal erosion and create an environment that is more favorable for surfing. Surfers could be permitted to congregate at nearby fishing piers in certain situations. The rules pertaining to surfing nearby fishing piers could be less strictly enforced, and a disclaimer could be posted, stating that the users are surfing at their own risk and liability. This could free police officers from the time-wasting crunch of enforcement, allowing their talents to be better utilized elsewhere.

The ocean is not private property, but as the sign on Johnnie Mercer's Pier states: SURFING WITHIN 350 FEET IS PROHIBITED. VIOLATORS SUBJECT TO ARREST.

Do we really want to send our highly educated young men and women to jail for something as innocent as surfing? Putting people into the system for surfing could only be described as ridiculous. I have to think, Isn't there a better solution for all of this? But I make no pretense about my ability to offer an answer to a problem so complex.

The Surfrider Foundation's report concludes, "When devising coastal policy local officials should consider surfers as an important constituency whose economic impact is tied to coastal protection." Instead of being viewed as a fringe group of deadbeats, surfers should be regarded for what they are — viable, upstanding members of our coastal community.

Surfing has a profound impact on our local economy, and it's laughable to think that it should be discouraged or banned.

Jeff Spicoli had his moment in the sun, but it's time to let him go.

Fritts Causby is a North Carolina native who has been surfing since the 1980s. When he isn't busy writing about real estate or looking for waves, he finds joy by spending time with his daughter Bridget, golfing, cooking and mountain biking. He invites you to connect with him on social media.

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The Girl and the Gin

And the rise of King Cotton

By Nan Graham

Some of us are blessed to be born Southerners, some choose to live in the South, and others may be called "Accidental Southerners." They came South and were forever changed.

One of these, Rhode Islander Nathanael Greene, close personal friend and the most trusted officer of George Washington, led the Continental troops on a sweep to drive the British out of North and South Carolina. His young and beautiful wife, Catherine, known as Caty, gained something of a reputation herself during the War for Independence. Almost as frequent a visitor as the camp followers (as they were kindly called), Caty visited the general at pitched camps on numerous occasions during the six years of fighting. Caty proved to be quite prolific, but after each birthing hiatus, the conjugal meetings resumed. Among the officers, whispers of these scandalous reunions with her husband-general abounded. Five offspring later, the war was finally over.

After the victory, the grateful Carolinas rewarded Greene, who had risen from a private to a major general. South Carolina gave him 10,000 guineas; North Carolina, 5,000 guineas. But Georgia gave him what Southerners prize most: land. Greene was awarded 24,000 acres of choice land on the Savannah River, an estate named Mulberry Grove, confiscated from its former Tory owner, John Graham.

Greene, who returned to Georgia to start a new life with the reluctant young Caty — who had never been South — and their children, was determined to make their home and future on the land given him by the state. His love of the place is reflected in his letters to friends in Rhode Island. He wrote of his plantation Mulberry Grove: "The garden is delightful. The fruit trees and flowering shrubs form a pleasant variety. We have green peas almost fit to eat and as fine a lettuce as you ever saw. The mockingbirds surround us evening and morning. The weather is mild and the vegetable world progressing to perfection. We have in the same orchard apples, pears, peaches, apricots, nectarines, plums of various kinds, figs, pomegranate and oranges. And we have strawberries which measure three inches around."

Less than a year after moving to Mulberry Grove, Greene stopped at a neighbor's plantation to investigate his rice fields, a new interest of the general's. A day in the broiling Georgia sun in mid-June proved too much for the survivor of dozens of Revolutionary battles. He returned home ill with sunstroke and died a week later at age 44.

Widowed at 31, Caty soldiered on, raising her five children (now ages 10 to 3) and running the unprofitable plantation without slave labor, in accordance with her Quaker husband's beliefs. The energetic widow even managed to entertain President Washington on two of his visits South.

Mulberry Grove also welcomed a young tutor from a neighbor's plantation. Caty Greene convinced the tutor to stay at Mulberry Grove to work on his inventions. The tutor stayed, fascinated by cotton production and the labor-intensive task of separating seed from the cotton by hand. What was needed was an innovative combing system, a machine with wooden teeth, which separated the cotton fiber from the seed. So he devised a mechanical contraption using Caty's concept. But fibers in the comb tangled and caused the gin to malfunction. Wire teeth, Caty suggested.

Within a year the tutor, young Eli Whitney, or possibly Catherine Littlefield Greene, had invented the cotton gin with wire combs (gin being short for engine). Whitney applied for a patent under his name, since it was not customary for women to apply for patents. The invention of the cotton gin made the labor-intensive crop very profitable: King Cotton was born. The demand for slave labor skyrocketed. The gin arguably changed the South, as well as the course of American history, and the entire country . . . forever.

Nan Graham is a regular Salt *contributor and has been a local NPR commentator since 1995.*

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Winter plumage

Black-Bellied Plover

Look for them on sandy flats

By Susan Campbell

Along the coastline of North Carolina, we have shorebirds all of different shapes and sizes. Avocets, oystercatchers, yellowlegs, sandpipers and plovers are all represented here. The plover group comprises five regularly occurring species along our coast. The largest of these is the black-bellied plover.

As the name implies, adults have eye-catching black feathering on their bellies during the breeding season. Actually, the black extends from the face down to the underbelly, and is set off from the wings and back by a strip of white feathers along the side of the face down to the bend of the wing. Black-bellieds have extensive black and white flecking on their backs. The rump flashes white in flight.

All plovers have long, narrow wings; short, stout bills; and relatively short legs. These birds are built to forage in open habitat such as sand flats, rocky shorelines or grassy areas. They are visual predators, grabbing large insects beginning as early as the day after they hatch. Black-bellied plovers may also feed on a variety of invertebrates, from worms to small crabs.

Black-bellieds breed far to the north on the Arctic tundra, where their characteristic whistles give them away. They are extremely wary, acting as a sentry for other birds in the area. That is the reason it is believed that black-bellied plovers avoided mass mortality by market hunters that affected most American shorebird populations in the 19th century.

When in North Carolina, this species more often sports drab winter plumage, being a checkered gray-brown above with white underneath. Many other shorebird species employ the same strategy — no doubt to be well-camouflaged on the sandy coastal beaches of the Americas during the cooler months. Black-bellied plovers spend a lot of time standing on upper beaches or flats until they spot prey, which they will run to and snatch up with their bill. Should they detect a potential predator they will immediately take flight and call repeatedly to announce its presence.

Black-bellied plovers are found here in numbers during both spring and fall migration. The wintering population is also significant. Birds may be found along the coast and in estuaries, and occasionally flooded pastures and agricultural lands. They may be seen mixed in with other shorebirds, either singly or in small groups. However, there are some non-breeding birds that spend the summer here. These individuals are probably adolescents but are very striking and are hard to miss.

If you find a group of large plovers during fall migration, and look very closely, you may be able to pick out an American golden plover. This smaller plover does have a golden hue to its upper parts in breeding plumage as well as a dark rump, and has gray (not black) feathers in its "arm pit." Golden plovers are also seen inland, even in our mountains. They are often found in habitat with abundant grasshoppers, their favorite prey.

Black-bellied plovers should not be that tough to find at this time of year in open sandy habitats. So grab your binoculars and head for the beach. I bet you will spot one in no time at all!

Susan would love to receive your wildlife sightings and photos. She can be contacted at susan@ncaves.com.

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The Sound of You

This morning I wake to music,
the sound of the cat lapping water from the glass on my nightstand,
and wish I could capture the softness with words.

The 1-2-3 rhythm sends me waltzing with you in the garden,
in the kitchen, kissing in the rain on the sidewalk,
and I wonder why I've only written love poems for the ones who broke my heart.

The cat is still drinking, and as you sleep,
I wish I could capture your softness.

Then it hits me.
Those love poems were never for them.
I wrote them as if the words might fill the cracks,
as if my own love might mend my brokenness,
as if, some day, I might learn to waltz.

The coffee is steeping, and as you stir from sleep,
love spills from me freely, not to fill some void,
but because there is so much here.

Drink from this sacred fountain. Dance beneath it.
Like every love poem you have ever written,
this is and has always been yours.

– Ashley Wahl

Growing a Greener Wilmington

Thanks to the vision of David Brenner, thriving community gardens are popping up all over town

By Barbara J. Sullivan · Photographs by Mark Steelman

Sometime within the last decade, the pundits began talking about silos, those grain storage facilities which the vast majority of Americans only glimpse while speeding by on a stretch of rural highway. Silos have become the new metaphor to describe what's happened to our country — groups and subgroups living apart in their own realities, unable to understand or communicate effectively with one another.

The current wisdom is that our silos are constructed on political beliefs, economic status, religion, race, gender, age, ethnicity — and maybe even who you were rooting for on *Game of Thrones*. Possibly it's as bad as they say. Maybe the nation has always suffered gaping divides which are just now getting more attention. But the truth is, a person with an open mind, a positive outlook and a lot of determination can have friends from every part of town and across every border of class, race, socioeconomic status, age or belief system. In Wilmington, North Carolina, David Brenner is just such a person.

It's fitting that Brenner's particular obsession, and the thing that's led him to connect with all and sundry people, is community gardening. Yes, he creates impressive numbers of vegetable plots in neighborhoods all around town, but in the other sense of the phrase "community gardener" he's also a cultivator of people and of communities. Without hesitation he rushes headlong to meet the next person who will become his friend, his collaborator, his partner in this vivid vision he has. It might be a sheriff's deputy working with at-risk youth, the pastor of a church or a group of self-described free-thinkers, agnostics and atheists. It might be a leading local banker, real estate agent, architect or a longtime community activist who hosts a daylong block party every year for her neighbors struggling to make ends meet.

Brenner is as comfortable with the mayor as he is with a gaggle of sixth-graders. He careens between non-English-speaking Burmese refugees and hospital surgeons, the very young, the very old, those who live in wealthy neighborhoods and those who cultivate their plots in public housing common areas. He literally shuttles all over town meeting with folks who have come

Urban Farm

to love him and what he does. He's been described as "the Mr. Rogers of gardening," possibly because of his unrelentingly positive attitude or that slightly mischievous smile in his eyes inviting you to join him in his next adventure.

"I was always a workaholic and never did anything for the community," he says. After retirement, he began volunteering for the Master Gardener program at the New Hanover County Arboretum and from there was smitten by the idea of creating sustainable community gardens. Back in 2014, when he got started, the idea wasn't new. Volunteers from various nonprofits and churches had planted gardens around town but, sadly, most had withered from lack of water, or exploded into a jumble of chickweed, fescue grass and vetch from lack of attention.

As Brenner embarked on his mission, he was sobered by the thought that school gardens might peter out in the summer months, when students and teachers were not there to administer TLC; gardens without a permanent water source might well suffer from drought; and if the one devoted curator of a particular neighborhood garden were to die or move away, the once luxuriant plot would revert to a weed patch within months.

Before retiring, Brenner had worked as a mechanical engineer. His first gardening inspiration came from his mother, one of seven children raised on a farm in South Carolina during the Depression who at age 11 took over most of the job of running the family household. She stood on a chair to cook and raised a windowsill-full of peppers and tomatoes in Dixie cups. From the bounty of her 20-by-50-foot garden, she canned beets, tomatoes, beans and more.

Brenner, who has an apparently inexhaustible supply of energy —"I go to bed at 11 and get up at 4," he says — seems to be made of the same stuff as his mother. The word *undaunted* comes to mind.

Brenner had read about Philadelphia Green, a long-established and highly successful citywide gardening program with deep community support. "I said, 'If they can make it work in the inner city of Philadelphia, we can certainly make it work here.'" Similar movements had succeeded in Detroit and Wilmington, Delaware, their antecedents reaching back at least as far as 19th-century English allotment gardens — half-acre plots rented out by landlords to provide a critical food source for marginalized rural laborers.

In the U.S., before the advent of Social Security and food stamps, urban community gardens filled a need for food supplements and were widely seen as beneficial to the overall health, education and morale of the population. Civic-minded citizens rallied around the Vacant Lot movement, the School Garden Army, wartime Victory Gardens and Liberty Gardens, as well as the Garden City and City Beautiful movements, all of which sought to leaven the cement and granite bleakness of urban neighborhoods with refreshing green spaces and, if possible, health-giving food.

Brenner's initial spark of enthusiasm, combined with an unusually high friendliness quotient, propelled him into a five-year spate of community garden-making. To date, with the help of hundreds of good-hearted collaborators, he's put in or renovated 10 gardens and is developing a 2-acre urban farm. To make his efforts official, he created an organization called Wilmington Green. Basically it consisted of himself and anyone who was willing to help.

The first garden materialized in 2015, after a friend told him about a group of Burmese refugees with farming skills who were learning English at Devon Park United Methodist Church. They were living in nearby apartments and had no access to gardening plots of their own. The minister, Bill Adams, happily granted Brenner the use of the church's large backyard. Brenner lassoed the New Hanover

County Farm Bureau, Downtown Rotary Club, Wilmington Regional Association of Realtors, Sea Coast Advantage Realty and New Hanover County Extension Service into his corral, all of them donating funds. Farmers Supply donated a toolshed, and the Realtors' group helped him install the beds.

Through the Interfaith Refugee Ministry, with some language interpretation, Brenner met with the Burmese neighbors and handed out the seeds, transplants and tools, organizing an overall planting scheme. Before long, the 18 raised beds, each 8-by-20 feet, were teeming with vegetables familiar to the Burmese: Bangkok hot peppers, Japanese eggplants, bitter melons and loofahs — the commonly eaten green stage of the vegetable that, when dried out, turns into a nifty shower accessory. By fall, lush green sorrel plants 5 feet tall and equally wide dominated the once barren churchyard.

In that same year, Brenner heard about a small space behind the Shaw Speaks Community Center at Third and Wooster Street, home to the Elements program, where New Hanover County sheriff's deputies mentored neighborhood youth. "Man, I'm going to go find this," he said. He immediately drove over, knocked on the door and introduced himself. After a tour of the overgrown backyard, choked with trees and weeds, he and the Elements team decided to work together on making a garden. He leveraged this newly formed partnership into a community-wide endeavor, rounding up help from Work on Wilmington — the volunteer corps sponsored by the chamber of commerce and local companies, a squad of teen volunteers from a drug rehab program and what he calls "neighbor mentors." These are individuals in the neighborhood who help with the initial clearing and building stages and, more importantly, agree to help tend the garden once all the hoopla has died down. One neighbor mentor, Queen Bell — the woman who for years has sponsored an annual community day involving free food and clothing for her neighbors on 7th Street — enjoyed working in the Elements garden so much that she went on to get her Master Gardener certificate.

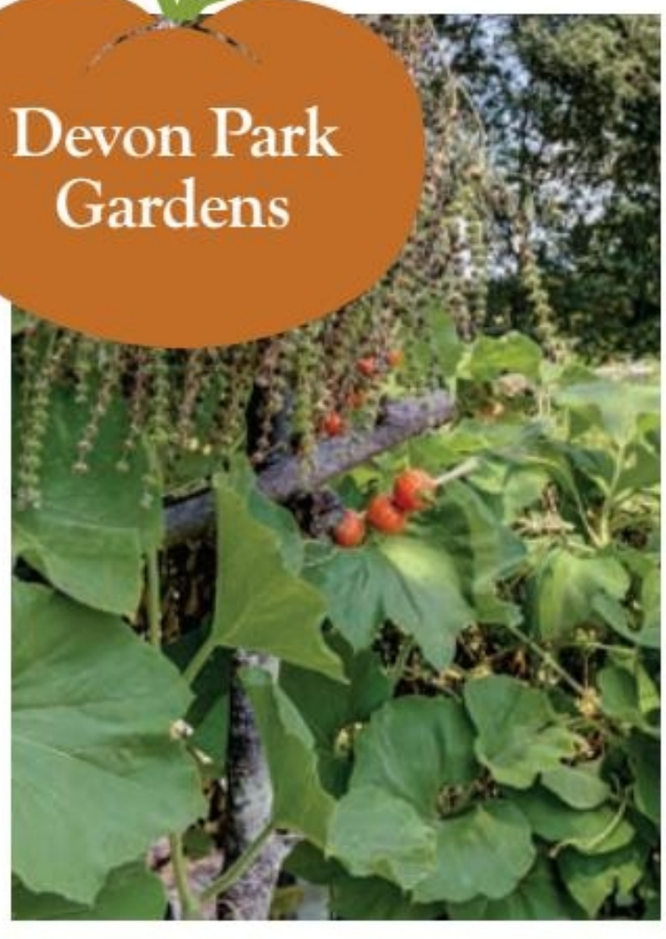
After the Elements garden, Brenner took on the Annie Nixon Community Garden at Dock and 9th Street, a small space that had been planted a decade earlier by a church group and had since fallen on hard times, mostly due to lack of water. Brenner heard about the garden from Delores Williams, his friend, colleague and adviser and one of the most energetic supporters of Wilmington Green. In 2016, with the help of a gift from Live Oak Bank and the Cape Fear Garden Club, Brenner got a tap hooked up to the city water line, cleared and replanted the garden, and drafted a neighbor mentor, a nearby retired schoolteacher, to oversee the upkeep.

In that same year, Brenner met Tom Barnett, then rector of St. John's Episcopal Church, who had the idea of creating a "bridge of love to the community" by planting gardens in the backyard. Brenner, of course, was all for it. The Wilmington Regional Association of Realtors and Sea Coast Advantage Realty once again contributed funds. Under Brenner's supervision, church members and community volunteers installed 12 raised beds, all of which have been officially blessed and are now enjoyed with celebratory neighborhood get-togethers. Half of the harvest goes to the Good Shepherd homeless shelter.

Brenner gives a great deal of credit to the Realtors association for helping to make his community garden vision a reality. They have funded five of his 10 gardens as well as provided the sweat equity and muscle power to clear the lots and build the beds. For the fifth community garden, installed behind the First Christian Church, they worked side by side with Mayor Bill Saffo, who lifted shovelfuls of manure in support of the cause.

In 2017, at a fellowship luncheon, Brenner sat next to an oncologist from New Hanover Regional Medical Center who had always thought the hospital needed a working garden. Within no time Brenner had made a new set of friends among the hospital staff, including the volunteer coordinator, nutritionist, dietitians, the hospital outreach coordinator, doctors and nurses. Together they settled on what Brenner describes as "a beautiful spot with full sun and water already there for irrigation," located behind the four story Heart Center rehab building. The Realtors group, whose name was now Cape Fear Realtors, together with the Cape Fear Garden Club, put up the money for the garden and helped install 12 raised beds, each 4-by-16 feet. Unfortunately, a horde of hungry Canadian geese found the location irresistible and ate the vegetables in seven of the 12 beds down to the

Devon Park Gardens



First Christian Church Gardens

nubbins, sparing only the collards.

After the goose catastrophe, Brenner wondered what to do next. Former New Hanover County Extension Director Al Hight suggested using floating row covers. "We planted carrots and spinach and lettuce the first week in December," says Brenner. "We didn't touch it until February. Went out there and lifted the row covers, and to my amazement I had beautiful beds full of lettuce. And the best spinach I've ever raised."

After that, the hospital added a goose-proof fence. The following year, again with the help of Cape Fear Realtors, Brenner and NHRMC embarked on phase two of the gardens, adding 12 more vegetable beds plus a set of eight herb beds, four flower beds and two benches built by a young Eagle Scout named Darryl Chin, whose father worked at the hospital.

For a year Brenner tended the hospital gardens by himself, but eventually one of the hospital administrators whose office overlooked the gardens took pity on him and organized some of the surgeons, nurses and other staff to come out and help. The NHRMC garden is thriving. The hospital staff harvests the vegetables and sets them out in the lobby a couple of times a week for the heart patients to take home. The NHRMC nutritionist conducts cooking classes with produce from the garden. According to Brenner, there's even talk about giving patients "prescriptions" for vegetables.

Once a month Brenner meets at the hospital gardens with a group of volunteers from nCino, a tech company formerly affiliated with Live Oak Bank. "I'll have seeds, soil or plants so we can do the heavy work," he says. "Four people and me, we do the weeding and we get a whole trailer full of weeds."

At the urging once more of Delores Williams, Brenner laid out his seventh community garden at Hillcrest, a Wilmington Housing Authority complex off Dawson Street. Williams was friends with Hattie McIver, WHA's community liaison coordinator. The project brought in area teens from the nonprofit Kids Making It to help create the garden beds, as well as support from Feast Down East, a program promoting local food production. By this time, hundreds of Wilmingtonians had participated one way or another in Brenner's community garden vision.

When funding didn't come through, as happened with his eighth community garden, Brenner footed the bill himself. At Glover Plaza, a WHA residence for the elderly and disabled, he rehabilitated six failing beds and added two more plus a toolshed. Once a month he visits with the residents, works in the gardens and shares in some fresh-picked food sampling.

The ninth community garden — this one at Castle and Fourth Street — was originally started by a man named Gordon Cole with the idea of engaging neighborhood youth in a small food production enterprise that would earn them income and make itself sustainable. Last year, when it became clear that the idea hadn't worked out, Cole asked Brenner if he'd like to take over the garden.

"I said I'd love to," Brenner recalls. Much of the work in the garden up until then had been done by a neighbor mentor named James Avery, a resident of Solomon Towers, the nearby WHA apartment building for the elderly and handicapped. Avery was a skilled and dedicated gardener who, according to those who knew him, had a sixth sense for creating rich, productive soil. When Avery died of a heart attack working in the garden, the space was renamed in his honor. Produce from the James Avery Garden is made available to residents of Solomon Towers and to Mother Hubbard's Cupboard, a local food pantry.

The Cape Fear Humanists, a group already volunteering time at Mother Hubbard's Cupboard, asked Brenner if they could take over the work on the garden. Because they don't have quite enough volunteers to keep up with the weeds, Brenner still goes over periodically to help out. A local architectural firm, LS3P, designed and donated a small prototype hurricane shelter on the property, now used for storage and for meetings of the garden volunteers.

Finally, garden number 10 came about when the Sportsman Club at 11th and Castle Street reached out to Brenner to see about putting in a "Diversity Community Garden" on two lots they owned. The Cape Fear Realtors stepped up to the plate once again to make the garden a reality. It is maintained by club members and neighbors working along with sixth-graders from Williston Middle School, located

a few blocks away. The harvest gets divided up among neighbors, middle schoolers and the Good Shepherd Center.

Brenner's biggest dream, one that is currently unfolding in an impressive way, is the creation of an "urban farm." As it happened, Pastor Paul Evans of the First Pentecostal Holiness Church had his own dream of using the church's 2-acre plot to bring together the youth and the church elders and grow food for the community. "Holy mackerel," said Brenner on hearing about this. As of now, the farm boasts two substantial 60-by-80-foot beds capable of growing everything from arugula to zucchini. Plans have been drawn up to add an outdoor pizza oven, a meditation garden, an outdoor kitchen, picnic area, fire pit and greenhouse.

With so much experience under his belt, Brenner now has a formula. If there's room, he puts in an 8-by-12-foot shed for the tools. He sets up a composting area. He buys a combination of half topsoil-half compost when he first installs the beds, and then comes back every two years or so to top them off with a couple more inches of the mixture. Whether it's the planting depth for cucumber seeds (one inch), the average time it will take before a pumpkin can be harvested (115-120 days), the vegetables with the highest and lowest nutritional ratings (kale and onion, respectively), or how many pieces of pressure treated lumber, in varying widths and lengths, will be needed to create the urban garden (170), Brenner has figured it out. For each starter plant he adds Espoma Bio Tone and a tablespoon of nitrogen fertilizer. The plants seem to love it. "They take off like a shot," he says. He reapplies the nitrogen fertilizer with a balanced fertilizer later during the growing season.

None of this seems to be coming to an end anytime soon. Brenner is too concerned with food insecurity, the inequity in access to healthy, nutritious food and the food desert in the middle of the city to slow down his efforts. He's as geared up as ever about providing gardens for people in underserved communities.

"It's important," he says, "to be in touch with the land and where your food comes from and what food tastes like when you grow it yourself." Recently Wilmington Green merged with Community Enrichment Initiatives (CEI) to work together on the urban farm project and on a plan to build a commercial kitchen and garden at the MLK Center. Eventually food from the gardens could be processed in the kitchen and sold or distributed to the community; the group would have a presence at local farmers markets; they could create an income-producing CSA and add a strong educational component to their program.

James Avery Gardens

In the meantime, David Brenner lives wholly outside the world of silos and arbitrary labels. He sees only potential new colleagues, friends and collaborators in the all-important enterprise of growing gorgeous gardens. Field peas, watermelons, lima beans, okra — old, young, rich, poor — they all mingle into a glorious amalgam. And with enough care, the land is brought back to health by all of the people working together.

Barbara Sullivan is a regular Salt *contributor and the author of* Garden Perennials for the Coastal South.

New Hanover Regional Medical Center Gardens

Halfway Branch School

Under the Kudzu

A trio of dedicated educators is on a mission to reveal the legacy of Rosenwald Schools in Pender County

By Virginia Holman • Photographs By Mallory Cash

Dr. Richard Newkirk, Claudia Stack

Documentary filmmaker Claudia Stack has lived in rural Pender County since 1998. For much of her career she has worked in education, first as an academic advisor at UNCW, and later as a public school teacher. She says she came to documentary work unexpectedly.

In the spring of 2004, Stack and UNCW professor Tom Schmid worked on a commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the *Brown v Board of Education* decision. "So I took a small group of undergrads and started to look into what it was like to go to school here in the Cape Fear region at the time of segregation," she says. "Around that time, I became aware that some of the old wooden buildings that I would drive by in Pender County were actually schools." So she started talking to her neighbors and began reaching out to alumni of those schools.

Those conversations, some which have continued for 15 years, resulted in Stack's award-winning film, *Under the Kudzu*, which was largely shot and edited by former UNCW student Lyndon Kyle Holt. Stack also published a companion book for the film, titled *Rosenwald School Reflections*. Finally, along with two lifelong educators and Pender County Rosenwald school alumni, Dr. Richard Newkirk and Mrs. Betty B. Thompson, Stack offers presentations about

the profound history and legacy of African-American educational excellence in Pender County, North Carolina.

At the beginning of *Under the Kudzu*, Stack's meticulously researched documentary, viewers learn that "in the early 1920s, Pender County built six brick schools for whites, and provided centralized transportation to these schools . . . However, black children walked, sometimes up to five or six miles, to attend small primary schools scattered throughout the county."

Claudia Stack, Dr. Richard Newkirk, Betty B. Thompson

Although African-Americans in Pender County paid taxes used to fund public schools for whites only, racial segregation policies, commonly known as "Jim Crow laws," prevented black children from attending the very schools their families' tax dollars had helped build. Despite these discriminatory laws, African-American communities in Pender and the segregated South often found innovative ways to provide schools for their children.

These schools were often funded by knocking on the doors of each black family in the county, many of whom were sharecropping families laboring at wages "between 50 cents to $2 per day." As Stack points out in *Rosenwald School Reflections*, this fundraising was, in essence, a form of double taxation. Even so, community members gave what they could, pooled their funds, procured land and sometimes collaborated with places of worship and civic groups.

The results were impressive. By 1936 in Pender County, African-Americans had built 30 public schools; 15 of which were built with partial support from a program known as the Rosenwald Fund.

During segregation, the Rosenwald Fund was a tremendous resource for African-American communities that hoped to build schools. The brainchild of Booker T. Washington of the Tuskegee Institute, and funded by philanthropist and Sears Roebuck & Co. president Julius Rosenwald, this innovative funding program ran from 1913-1932, and provided matching funds and building plans to African-American communities in the South that wanted schools. (Preservationists note that buildings once used as Rosenwald schools are often identifiable by their classic, northeast-facing "nine over nine" paned windows, which were designed to maximize natural light in rural areas with limited or nonexistent electricity.)

According to Stack, black communities usually donated 20-25 percent of the cost, and often contributed land and labor. There was a caveat: In order for the funds to be disbursed, communities had to get the local school board "to agree to operate the school as a public school."

Stack says the reasons the Rosenwald Fund required having local school boards own and operate Rosenwald-funded schools were both philosophical and practical. "The fund wanted to push Southern school boards, whose members were typically all European-American, to take more responsibility for educating African-American students," she says. "It brought more African-American schools under the public umbrella, pushing local government to serve those students, albeit within the confines of segregation." In addition, she says, it helped provide uniform standards for teachers.

However, she points out that black teachers typically received 65 percent of the pay of their white counterparts, though they had to meet the same qualifications. Stack calls the Rosenwald requirement to sign over schools built by black families for black children to the public school board "a huge leap of faith."

It is hard to imagine the trepidation that many black community members at that time must have experienced. Particularly, Stack says, "after raising money and donating land/labor/materials handing over the schools to a public school system that had not served their children well in the past." She points out that the "African-American community in Canetuck had requested and been denied a public school by the board three times."

It was only after raising $1,226 and securing a Rosenwald grant that they were able to leverage school board approval. All told, 813 Rosenwald schools were built in the state of North Carolina and represent what Stack says is North Carolina's African-American communities' "extreme dedication to education."

Now, Stack, alongside esteemed retired educators and Rosenwald school alumni Dr. Richard Newkirk and Betty Thompson, are working to increase awareness of history and value of not just the Rosenwald school legacy, but also the contributions and sacrifices that African-American communities made during segregation to make sure education was available to all, noting contributions that shaped the history of public school education in the South. Their presentation, "Lessons from the Rosenwald Schools," focuses both on the history and the pedagogical techniques used in these schools.

Dr. Richard Newkirk attended several Rosenwald schools in Pender: Halfway Branch Elementary, West Pender Elementary, and C.F. Pope High School. He graduated from NC A&T in 1969. Betty Thompson attended Canetuck Elementary and Pender County Training School, and received her college degree from Winston Salem State University.

Growing up in segregated Pender County, Newkirk describes school as the safest environment that he had as a child. He particularly remembers the high expectations of the teachers, many of whom had received degrees at places like Hampton University in Virginia and Columbia University in New York.

"Our teachers weren't there to hear complaints, they were there to educate us," he says. "They also taught us how to deal with life." Newkirk says that teachers addressed the issues and problems of racist segregation policies plainly. In order to educate, teachers validated some of what black students at the time often already knew about institutional racism in the segregated South: "That you'd have to work twice as hard and know twice as much to earn half the pay but they also said here are tools to help you move forward

Canetuck School

PHOTOGRAPH PROVIDED BY CLAUDIA STACK

and deal with life successfully."

Newkirk says the focus in the schools he attended was squarely on solutions that provided each child with the best possible environment in which to learn, and the best available teachers, methods, and resources they could obtain. The teachers also provided students with an environment that Newkirk calls "love in action." To create a safe environment where students could learn, he recalls that teachers would minister to the needs of the student by getting to know them.

"For example," Newkirk says, "if a child was hungry, they might not tell a teacher, but a teacher would know, and the teachers would make sure you got what you needed without drawing attention to it, and then moved on so you could learn."

Mrs. Betty Thompson, who spent 37 years as an elementary school teacher and holds two master's degrees, attended the Canetuck School and then Pender County Training School. She credits the education she received from the teachers there with positioning her well for college: "My main goal in school was to get that education, because that is what the teachers stressed." She says that without the school, her options would have been much more limited, and that she didn't want to wind up "working in the sun."

"I knew from my teachers that my education was important and that my life would be improved with a good education because I would have more choices," she says. Thompson also speaks of the importance of the Pender County Rosenwald schools as "feeder schools" to historically black colleges and universities in the South. She says that the teachers at these schools were well-educated African-American role models who not only inspired their students but showed them, by example, the power of an education to change their lives and the lives of those around them. Thompson says one teacher in particular, Helen Foy Hall, inspired her decision to pursue education as a career.

Dr. Newkirk also cites one of his teachers, Mr. Clarence Calvin Cooper, as a strong influence: "Mr. Cooper was the first male teacher I ever had. I didn't realize how big an influence he had been until I started teaching. We could never give him simply an answer, we had to explain how we came to an answer."

Stack points out that the history and the influence of the Rosenwald schools and its impact on public education isn't as widely known today as it should be, even in the South.

Newkirk agrees. "Today," he says, "we take for granted that education is for everybody." And that was not the mindset during segregation or even for some years after *Brown v Board of Education*. Stack, Newkirk, and Thompson want people to know the stories of how African-American communities in Pender, North Carolina, and the South came together and built schools despite pernicious racism and segregation, and how those schools afforded their children with strong educational communities, opportunities for better careers, and better lives. African-American communities like those in Pender County left us with an enduring and treasured legacy, something we too often take for granted today: the right to a good public education for all.

Under the Kudzu is available on Amazon Prime video.
Claudia Stack will give a talk at Poplar Grove Plantation in Hampstead on September 21 from 1-3:30pm. For more information, visit stackstories.com.

Author and creative writing instructor Virginia Holman lives and writes in Carolina Beach.

A Plague Most Deadly

The yellow fever epidemic in the fall of 1862 was one of the greatest natural disasters in Wilmington's history

By Dr. Chris Fonvielle

People rushed to the riverfront to watch a splendid steamship slowly make her way up the Cape Fear River. They clapped and cheered as she tied in at the foot of Dock Street while sailors on board whooped and waved their caps in celebration of their successful run through the U.S. Navy's blockade of Wilmington, North Carolina.

The ship was the *Kate*, a Charleston, South Carolina-based blockade-runner smuggling supplies into the Confederacy. This was her first voyage to Wilmington, as she operated mostly in and out of her home port. It would be a fateful trip for a more grim reason. Within four months of the *Kate*'s arrival on August 6, 1862, yellow fever had claimed the lives of at least 7 percent of the town's population and residents held her responsible.

Within days of the war's first battle at Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor in mid-April 1861, President Lincoln proclaimed a naval blockade of the seceded states. He knew that the South — a region of mostly farmers, planters and slaves but only 16 percent of the nation's factories — would turn to European markets to procure both military supplies and civilian goods when war came.

Critics disregarded the blockade as a violation of international law, which defined a blockade as an act of war between belligerents. President Lincoln, however, refused to acknowledge the sovereignty of the newly established Confederate States of America. European governments vowed to remain neutral during the American conflict, but the potential for huge profits in trading guns for Southern cotton lured speculators on both sides of the Atlantic into the smuggling trade. Businessmen in the South and Europe, especially Great Britain, which became the Confederacy's biggest trading partner, established importing and exporting companies and developed strong trade alliances. John Fraser & Company of Charleston, which owned the *Kate*, was one of the more prominent firms. The Confederate government and state governments, including North Carolina, also invested heavily in blockade running.

The U.S. Navy faced an impossible task trying to stop the illegal trade. Too few ships at the beginning of the war and a lack of political and logistical support hampered its efforts. Moreover, the South's 3,549-mile-long coastline — extending from the Virginia Capes to the Florida Keys and then around to the Texas-Mexico border — compelled Union blockading vessels to concentrate their efforts against the South's major seaports, including New Orleans, Charleston, Savannah and Wilmington, among others.

Wilmington became the most popular point of entry for blockade-running ships. It was close to British trans-shipment points at Bermuda and in the Bahamas, where oceangoing merchantmen carried supplies destined for the Confederacy. There the cargoes were

transferred to smaller, swift blockade-runners for the final dash into Southern seaports.

Blockade-runners enjoyed a success rate of about 80 percent at Wilmington, as the Cape Fear River could be accessed by one of two entryways — Old Inlet, the main bar and New Inlet, a shallow strait 6 miles to the northeast. Bald Head Island and Frying Pan Shoals separated the inlets, offering blockade-runners a choice of entry and exit at the harbor. Unable to adequately cover both inlets, Union blockaders faced utter frustration. "(Blockading Wilmington) was very like a parcel of cats watching a big rat hole," observed one naval officer, "the rat often running in when they are expecting him to run out and visa versa."

After Union military forces captured Norfolk, Virginia, as well as North Carolina's Outer Banks and port towns along Albemarle and Pamlico Sounds in the spring of 1862, Wilmington became the closest major seaport to the Virginia battlefront. Three railroads linked Wilmington with key cities in the Carolinas and Virginia. The Wilmington and Weldon Railroad, which connected the Tar Heel port to Petersburg, Virginia, became the "Lifeline of the Confederacy" for supplying General Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia.

The Union blockade was so weak during the first two years of the war that all types of ships, mostly sailing vessels, were employed as blockade-runners. Slowly but surely the number of Union blockaders increased through construction, purchase and the conversion of captured blockade-runners into cruisers. As the blockade tightened, more Southern seaports were either effectively blockaded or captured with the assistance of Union Army forces. As a result, the Confederacy turned to using speedy steamships to run the U.S. Navy's gauntlet. The *Kate* was only the third steamship to run the blockade at Wilmington.

The *Kate* was built as the *Carolina*, a wooden-hulled side-wheel steamer, by Samuel Sneeden of Greenpoint, New York, in 1852. John Fraser & Company of Charleston purchased the ship in December 1861 to use as a blockade-runner. George Alfred Trenholm, the company's chief executive officer, renamed her *Kate* for his son William's wife, Kate MacBeth Trenholm.

The *Kate* became one of the most successful Confederate commerce vessels, reportedly making 20 runs through the Union blockade between January and November of 1862. Trenholm considered the *Kate* the workhorse of his flotilla of blockade-runners, and the profits she earned enabled him to purchase additional ships.

Trenholm assigned Thomas J. Lockwood of Charleston to captain the *Kate*, which he nicknamed *The Packet* because of her impressive speed and success. Lockwood or Trenholm allegedly was the inspiration for Margaret Mitchell's fictional character Rhett Butler in her 1936 book, *Gone With the Wind*. Either way, blockade-runners became an important part of American popular culture in the late 1930s. C.C. "Kit" Morse of Smithville (modern Southport, North Carolina) served as the *Kate*'s pilot, guiding her in and out of Charleston and Wilmington without ever getting caught by Union blockaders.

Perhaps Kit Morse's connection to the Cape Fear prompted Trenholm in part to send the *Kate* to Wilmington. She sailed on Aug. 2 from Nassau in the Bahamas, where a yellow fever outbreak was underway. By the time the *Kate* reached Wilmington four days later, at least one crewman was fevered. Other sailors reportedly soon fell ill. After discharging her shipment of bacon and other food supplies and loading up with cotton for her outward voyage, the *Kate* made a quick turnaround and sailed from the Tar Heel seaport.

Rumors of yellow fever in Wilmington began soon after the *Kate*'s departure, although several residents had died of the disease earlier that summer of 1862. Agues, a catch-all term for fevers in those days, were a common occurrence during the hot months, which people referred to as the "sickly season." When temperatures got hot, people got sick, especially in urban centers.

Decades before doctors possessed any knowledge of germs, bacteria and viruses, they believed in the airborne theory for the spread of diseases. Rotting refuse and carcasses of dead animals, stagnant ponds and swamps all created miasmic, noxious and pernicious vapors responsible for illnesses and death. Low-lying areas and cellars overflowed from frequent heavy rains in June, July and August in Wilmington.

Local newspapers reported on the swarms of annoying mosquitoes, but doctors never connected the *Aedes aegypti* to the spread of the yellow fever virus. Even so, residents facetiously remarked that the disease was likely the plot of a Yankee mosquito. "A new mosquito has been invented recently in these parts," reported the *Wilmington Daily Journal* on Aug. 22, 1862. "This mosquito, while screwing in his bill, sings 'Yankee Doodle' and other anti-Confederate airs through his hind legs."

Father Thomas Murphy of St. Thomas Catholic Church on Dock Street performed the funeral of Henry Smith, a 30-year-old Irishman who died of yellow fever exactly one week after the *Kate*'s arrival. James Sprunt, an early chronicler of Cape Fear history and a postwar cotton magnate, claimed that Lewis Swarzman, a 36-year-old, German-born wood and coal dealer who provided fuel for the *Kate*'s outgoing voyage, was the first official victim of the yellow fever epidemic, although Swarzman's obituary reported that he died of a stroke. Whatever caused his death, rumors began spreading as fast as the fever.

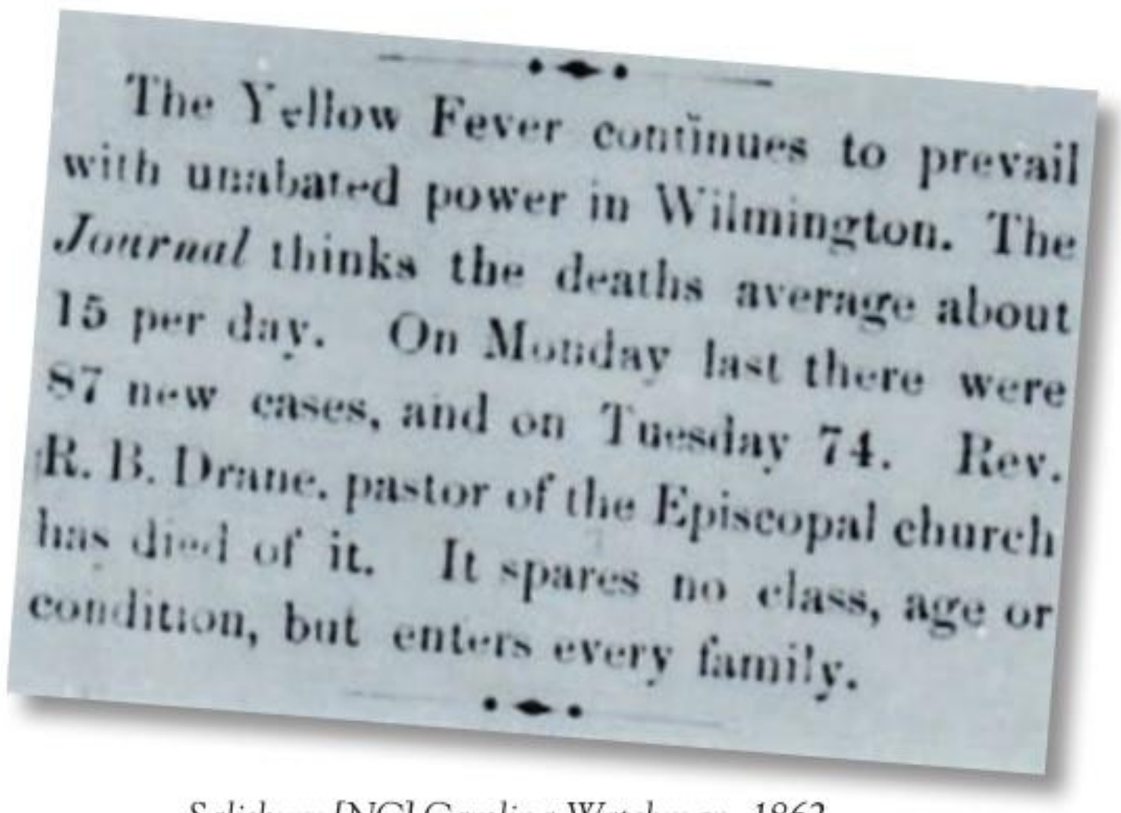
MARKET STREET, WILMINGTON, NORTH CAROLINA.

Doctors announced in mid-September that they had documented only five yellow fever cases. By the end of the month, however, the numbers had increased dramatically, and new patients overwhelmed Wilmington physicians Thomas B. Carr, James Dickson, James F. McRee and others. Hoping to prevent a public panic, Mayor John Dawson ordered that the ensuing crisis be investigated, but the number of cases grew day after day after day. By the end of September, doctors conceded that Wilmington was in the throes of a full-blown yellow fever epidemic.

The disease began innocuously enough with a fever, chills and diarrhea, but eventually gave way to internal hemorrhaging, black vomit and jaundice. It did not discriminate as to its victims. Mary Ashe McRee, the wife of Dr. James F. McRee, died of yellow fever. Griffith J. McRee, a prominent citizen, lost his mother, wife, young daughter, and teenaged son and namesake. It also claimed the life of Georgia Weeks, who worked in a house of ill-repute called the Hole in the Wall. James Quigley, the superintendent of Oakdale Cemetery, succumbed on Oct. 15, 1862, his 32nd birthday.

A number of local doctors, ministers and nurses risked their lives to care for and comfort the sick, and in some cases fell victim to the disease themselves. Rector Robert B. Drane of St. James Episcopal Church, Reverend John L. Pritchard of First Baptist Church, and Dr. James Dickson all died of mosquito bites while tending to patients of the so-called "yellow jack."

To combat the perceived airborne disease, residents began burning barrels of turpentine and rosin in their yards and on street corners which, ironically, kept mosquitoes at bay. The smoldering fires also created a pall of thick black smoke that hung over the town. Acting on doctors' recommendations, civil authorities instructed residents to pump out excess water from their cellars, clear garbage from their properties, and remain indoors after darkness.



The Yellow Fever continues to prevail with unabated power in Wilmington. The *Journal* thinks the deaths average about 15 per day. On Monday last there were 87 new cases, and on Tuesday 74. Rev. R. B. Drane, pastor of the Episcopal church has died of it. It spares no class, age or condition, but enters every family.

Salisbury [NC] Carolina Watchman, 1862

As casualties mounted in late September, panicked citizens who could afford to leave town packed their belongings and fled to Wrightsville Sound or Masonboro Sound. Others sought refuge in towns in the Piedmont and the mountains of North Carolina. Although they did not understand why, ocean breezes and cooler temperatures inland created healthier environments. Armand John DeRosset's family escaped to Chapel Hill. Yet some communities, including Fayetteville and Lumberton, either quarantined refugees from Wilmington or denied them entry altogether.

James Fulton, editor and publisher of the *Wilmington Daily Journal*, maintained a daily account of the disease's progress, but eventually

even he suspended operations and left town. The telegraph bureau also closed, and train and mail service ran irregularly. Wilmington became a virtual ghost town, as perhaps half the population of 10,000 people departed. The Confederate Army also vacated its troops, moving them downriver to Fort Fisher at New Inlet. "Silence reigned everywhere," observed one eyewitness. "The dogs howled from hunger, and the very birds of the air had deserted the city. Death and pestilence had possession of every place. Want and misery was everywhere discernible."

Residents who remained behind — disproportionately poor whites, free blacks and slaves — bore the brunt of the epidemic.

At its height in mid-October, as many as 15 people a day were dying. "Oct. 14th summed up for twenty-four hours previous, 87 new cases and 43 interments," penned one diarist. "The report for Saturday, the 18th, gives the number of new cases for the same period at 500, and the number of interments for the same period at 150. This was the terrible week."

Writing many years after the war, John D. Bellamy Jr. vividly recalled watching corpse-bearing wagons roll past his family's grand home at Market Street and Fifth Avenue, heading toward Oakdale Cemetery in the eastern suburbs. Unable to receive proper burials, more than 400 victims were interred in hastily dug graves on an otherwise pleasant grassy slope in Oakdale's public grounds still known as Yellow Fever Hill.

Wilmington's abandonment by many white residents proved beneficial for some enslaved African-Americans. Fewer whites meant less security, as serving in slave patrols to prevent escapes and revolts was mandatory for white men. William Benjamin Gould, an enslaved plasterer who helped build the Bellamy Mansion, and seven fellow bonded men made their getaway on the night of Sept. 21, 1862. Launching a boat at the foot of Orange Street, they rowed 28 miles down the Cape Fear River to freedom. Early the following morning, the blockading ship *USS Cambridge* picked them up at Old Inlet. Other slaves, although their numbers are unknown, also participated in the "great escape" as yellow fever raged in Wilmington.

At the urgent request of Mayor Dawson, who remained in Wilmington, Gen. P.G.T. Beauregard at Charleston sent his personal physician, Dr. W.T. Wragg, to the Tar Heel seaport. Until his arrival, people tried all kinds of experimental treatments to combat the disease, including putting a cloth patch soaked in "gas tar" on the chest of a fevered person. Experienced in treating both yellow fever and malaria, Dr. Wragg administered regular doses of quinine to his patients, with modest success. Nuns from Charleston's Convent of Our Lady of Mercy also came to Wilmington to serve as nurses, some of whom fell prey to the fever and were buried at the Catholic cemetery on the Topsail Sound Road (formerly located near the St. Mary's development at Market and 23rd Streets).

When General W.H.C. Whiting arrived in mid-November to assume command of the District of the Cape Fear, he found Wilmington undefended and in disorder. He feared the Union Army might take advantage of the chaos by launching an overland assault from their base at New Bern only 90 miles to the north, or by a landing an expeditionary force at Wrightsville Beach for an advance against Wilmington from the east. Whiting need not have worried, as Union military personnel feared yellow fever, which they knew gripped Wilmington, more than battling Confederate soldiers. The anticipated attack never materialized.

Along with Gen. Whiting, November brought cooler weather, which abated the yellow fever and killed the hordes of *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes. Traumatized residents slowly returned home, but wondered if their town would ever truly recover.

According to statistics compiled by James Fulton of the *Wilmington Daily Journal*, yellow fever killed at least 654 people of 1,500 reported cases. The numbers were likely higher as African-American casualties went underreported or unreported. Whatever the exact figures, the 1862 yellow fever epidemic was one of the deadliest natural disasters in Wilmington's history. Convinced that the *Kate* was to blame for all the hardship and death, Wilmingtonians came to view blockade-running as a necessary evil at best.

James Sprunt put it well when he wrote that "blockade-running was both life-preserving and death-dealing for the Confederacy." That was certainly true for Wilmington.

Dr. Chris Fonvielle is professor emeritus in the Department of History at UNC Wilmington, and the author of articles and books on the Civil War in North Carolina and the history of the Lower Cape Fear. Upon his retirement in 2018, he was awarded the Order of the Long Leaf Pine in recognition of his distinguished service to the state of North Carolina.

1862 BURIAL SITE
OF YELLOW FEVER VICTIMS
Communal burial site of approximately 400 people who died of yellow fever during Wilmington's epidemic between September and the frosts of November 1862. Few yellow fever victims' burials are marked with headstones.
In 1862 Wilmington's population, black and white, was approximately 10,000. About half of the population fled the city to avoid the epidemic. Of the 1,505 reported cases, 654 (43%) died of yellow fever.

Historical marker to 400 victims of Wilmington's 1862 yellow fever epidemic buried in Oakdale Cemetery.

PHOTOGRAPH BY MELVA CALDER

How to Make a House a Home

Lindsey Cheek refreshes a stately Tudor with a colorful jewel-tone palette and serene and stylish accents

By William Irvine · Photographs By Andrew Sherman

There are not too many designers who can also claim to have planned their clients' wedding. But Lindsey Cheek, the founder and owner of Gathered, did just that. In her previous life as a wedding planner, she met Torri and Mike Winstead, a real estate developer and local business owners of the Wilmington Yoga Center. They all got along so well that eight years later, when the couple purchased a large neo-Tudor house and needed some decorating advice, there was no question who they would call for help.

The house is set on a large wooded property that backs up onto the Arboretum, a very private and serene space. The Tudor-style brick and wood house, built in the 1970s, is set back from the road and is approached on a winding drive through a series of defined outdoor spaces: There is an outdoor dining room with seating area; a water feature with a small waterfall and stream that adds a soothing note to the proceedings. And there is a tennis court painted in stunning colors by the artist Brian Davis. Behind the house lies a swimming pool and his-and-hers outbuildings; the latter also features a gym.

A house this size can be intimidating and require lots of furniture on a large scale, something the clients had in abundance. But other than that, the house was incomplete. They were missing key items — rugs, pillows and other decorative pieces — that give a house personality. "Torri and Mike both have a great sense of personal style," says Cheek. "They're well-traveled, worldly, and they appreciate original art. We loved working with them because they think outside the box and go way beyond traditional coastal style."

Upon entering the front door, you are (surprisingly) greeted by a small office on the left. It is a hint that the floor plan might be unconventional, and it is.

"The layout is probably my favorite of any of the houses I have worked on," says Cheek. "It's the progression of rooms that reveals itself very slowly — you're not sure what's going to be around the corner." The office is where Mike routinely spends time reading. Cheek added

HABITAT
OUTSIDE IN

a neutral black and white-patterned Stark carpet to bring everything together, and bright colors with curtains from designer Lindsey Cowles. A citron leather desk chair brings another punch of color, and there is a turntable for some old-school record listening.

The centerpiece of the downstairs is a large, baronial living room, with beautiful dark wooden beams and a whitewashed ceiling that creates a cozy English country look. The woodwork is an important architectural element — there are stunning dovetailed corners and old wooden paneling. "The challenge here is that it's such a big, bold room that it needed softening," says Cheek. She brought in lots of fabrics, and textiles and patterns in eight different pillows. A neutral Stark carpet is topped with a colorful dhurrie rug. "We needed to bring in a lot of jewel tones in untraditional colors in such a masculine space. It's a good foil to the solid architecture and dark wood tones."

The kitchen at the other end of the room also needed some style assistance. The centerpiece, a custom kitchen island mounted on what looks like a piece of antique cabinetry with columns, is covered in a gray marble top. Cheek added some bold Drum pendants in brass from Urban Electric Company in Charleston and surrounded the island with four vintage-looking black leather and brass barstools from Arteriors.

"We wanted to make this a dressy room but still cozy," says Cheek of the adjacent informal dining room, which overlooks the swimming pool. She added custom chairs from Mr. Brown that are evocative of Second Empire French side chairs. They are covered in a bold abstract expressionist-patterned fabric from Lindsey Coles. The red brick wall was painted a flat white to add texture and contrast to the sheer curtains by Laura Perroni on the windows to the pool.

Bold statements can be made in the smallest spaces, and Cheek enlivened a pair of downstairs bathrooms, one with a lively Russian-colored wallpaper with the look of tilework, the other with a printed black wallpaper reminiscent of Louise Nevelson sculptures and rectangular Arteriors mirror and sconces.

But how to enliven a dull wood-paneled stairhall? No problem. Cheek added a Missoni fabric in jewel tones with brass rods as a stair runner. And on the first landing is a vignette from the Coastal Succulent flanking a Buddha statue underneath a stunning gold branch and crystal chandelier from Curry and Company. The result is calming. "It's very soothing up here — very Zen," she says.

Climbing the stairs brings you to an upstairs office, which would work for just about any business: The room is dominated by a big square architectural drafting table with marble top in the center of the room. Cheek jazzed things up with some bold cocoa and black Kelly Wearstler wallpaper, reminiscent of Matisse drawings, which wraps around the room, and a sculptural pendant light from Visual Comfort.

The overall effect is a house with personality and style to spare, and a client who is up for anything. "We also just get along really well, and that makes the process fun," says Cheek with a smile. "In fact, we are currently helping them design their fabulous new condo in Miami. It's going to be incredible."

Stay tuned.

William Irvine is the senior editor of Salt.

LISA WAYNE

REALTOR/BROKER

Excellence, Pure & Simple

For over 26 years, Lisa Wayne has made a successful career by performing her job with an unrivaled skill and attention, and her level of balanced professionalism and local area knowledge sets her apart. Keeping clients informed throughout that process has proven effective in accomplishing her clients' goal of buying a home, selling or investing, while also considering their financial goals, retirement, and other life goals.

Lisa was raised in Cerro Gordo, NC, about an hour west of Wilmington, and has called this area home for almost 30 years. As a young woman, she quickly developed a passion to pursue a career in real estate. After graduating from UNCW with a degree in business management/ marketing, Lisa put her unique marketing skills to quick use. Aside from her successful real estate practice, Lisa enjoys time with her husband, Jon, and her son, Jonathan (who goes by "Jon Wayne Jr."). You can often find them on the weekends boating, fishing, traveling or picnicking along the water.

Lisa is a strong supporter of the local Lower Cape Fear Hospice and masonboro.org, which works to keep Masonboro Island open for public use. A natural athlete, Lisa enjoys all forms of recreational activities including marathons, tennis, running, and boating.

Lisa's background in sales, marketing, and customer service, coupled with her knowledge of Wilmington's many neighborhoods, have made her a successful and sought-after real estate professional.

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A SPECIAL ADVERTISING SECTION

PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDREW SHERMAN

GIGI SIREYJOL-HORSLEY

OWNER, LEAD DESIGNER

Gigi Sireyjol-Horsley, owner and lead interior designer of Paysage Home since 2015 and her fantastic team, don't create because they have to, they create because they love to. Paysage Home prides itself on curated home decor with an old-world charm and culture. They thrive on attention to detail, building strong relationships and loyalty with their clients and making sure to meet expectations with every project.

Gigi credits her parents for giving her such an exposure to the world as she was born in Casablanca, Morocco and then made her way back to France in her early teens, then on to law school. After living in Kiawah, South Carolina, she and her husband relocated to Wilmington and now couldn't imagine calling anywhere else home.

Gigi was influenced by her mother's eye for beauty and taste, with a keen eye toward texture, shape, and patina using fabrics, wood, stone, leather, metal, or ceramic to bring an unexpected boldness to an interior: "I often fuse a sentimental family piece in a bold new interior to achieve a goal and accentuate my client's uniqueness. A single piece of perfection can give definition to your environment."

Gigi and her husband, Steve, her biggest supporter, have four adult children who reside on the West Coast and in Charleston. She is a proud mother and grandmother to 2,4, and 7-year-old granddaughters and an 8-year-old grandson who are the joy of her life. In addition, her passions include cooking, painting and gardening in her spare time. "Growing up in the shadow of a very bright brother I knew very early that I could not compete with him, therefore, cooking and painting became my first passion and refuge. But what's the point to cook if it's for yourself? So, entertaining came naturally as a new hobby and I then realized why my mother excelled on setting up beautiful tables and giving memorable parties." she says.

She started to take private art classes at the age of 6. "It's pretty clear that playing with paint, color and shapes set me up to gardening but it's wild to think about how little thought I put into it. she says. "I feel lucky to be caught between my passions. I enjoy navigating these waters converging with each other from time to time. I already try to share these pleasures with my granddaughter and it takes me to another dimension."

While her stores are located in Wilmington and Raleigh, NC she serves clients across the country, supporting local artisans and sharing the beauty of interior design with home and business owners. Be on the lookout for a Charlotte branch of Paysage Home in the future!

910.256.6050
1908 EASTWOOD ROAD
WILMINGTON, NC
www.paysage.com

PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDREW SHERMAN

PAYSAGE HOME

ISLAND PASSAGE

Island Passage is more than just a company, it's all about community. The women's clothing, shoes and accessories boutique was founded in 1983. Owned by three women – Kristyn Prentice, Alison Drake, and Beth Ogden – together they worked very hard and, as a result of that dedication, acquired four thriving Island Passage stores by March 2014.

With two locations in downtown Wilmington (Island Passage and edet by Island Passage), one at Lumina Station and a larger store on Bald Head Island, the Island Passage brand and following extends across Greater Wilmington. Island Passage has been voted "Best Women's Clothing" many times by fashion enthusiasts. Owner Kristyn Prentice says, "Our goal is always to provide specialized personal service and stylish clothing with integrity and value." All of the owners feel very fortunate that the business has been around for 35 years and that Island Passage fashions are a staple in many closets around southeastern North Carolina.

In 2001 Kristyn moved to Wilmington after graduating from the University of Georgia with a degree in fashion merchandising, and started at Island Passage. Alison graduated with the same degree from Meredith College and started a year later when Island Passage was expanding with an additional location on Bald Head Island. Soon after that opening, Beth was hired; she and her husband had recently relocated from upstate New York. Now with a staff of 20 (+/-), depending on the time of year, the women are extremely grateful to their dedicated staff and managers for the relationships they have with their loyal customers.

The beautiful boutiques have fashions for every season and a dedicated staff that feels more like family. The owners are very involved in the Wilmington and Bald Head communities, and enjoy partnering with several local non-profits to give back. Island Passage is more than just a boutique to buy clothes, it is truly a community and every day the staff and customers prove it.

DOWNTOWN • LUMINA STATION • BALD HEAD ISLAND
www.islandpassageclothing.com

Island Passage
WOMEN'S CLOTHING + ACCESSORIES

PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDREW SHERMAN

GREG & CAT MARINICH

OWNERS

All of their hard work and dedication has paid off. At the recent Nothing Bundt Cakes (NBC) Annual Conference, Greg and Cat Marinich were recognized for their rapid success,receiving multiple awards. In only two years, they have accomplished what most small business owners only dream of: Out of 300+ NBC bakeries nationwide, they took home first place in Bakery Operations, 3rd place in Annual Sales Percentage Growth (42%!), and were among the three finalists for Owner/Operator of the Year. Says Cat: "We were completely blown away and speechless. Our whole bakery family, and that's what we are, has worked really hard. We were just so honored and proud to bring these awards home to our team and our community. Our little Wilmington bakery, shining above all the big cities!"

Greg and Cat first met at UNCW. Upon graduation, Greg commissioned into the US Army and they both jumped into military life that they had no idea would last 27 years! The Marinich family with two sons, Jack and Nick, moved all around the country and world to places that include Fort Bragg, NC, Fort Bliss, TX, Australia, Fort Leavenworth, KA, Fort Drum, NY, Kailua, HI, Italy, Germany, Memphis, TN and Belgium. In 2013, they came full circle and brought the family back to Wilmington.

When the four Marinichs are not at the bakery, Greg is passionate about coaching soccer and mentoring young men and women, and is currently head coach at Eugene Ashley High School. Cat and Jack are both very involved in the Wrightsville Beach Outrigger Canoe Club, with Jack currently serving as club president. Nick is super excited and honored to begin nursing school at CFCC this fall.

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PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDREW SHERMAN

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THE ALEXANDER KOONCE TEAM

Alexander Bellamy Koonce, known as Zander, is a 7th generation Wilmington native whose parents, grandparents and great-grandparents shared a belief in the enduring value of land. His father started a development company with Dan and Bruce Cameron in the early 1960s, which Zander and Bill Cameron still run to this day.

Zander took his love and knowledge of development and began his real estate career in 1993, after graduating from Episcopal High School and UNC- Chapel Hill. Soon after starting his accomplished real estate career, Zander started The Alexander Koonce Team with Intracoastal Realty, which currently consists of five team members.

Zander's family understood the value of land. His great-grandparents bought a house on Wrightsville Beach in the early 1900s, which remains in his family today. His father bought a house on Wrightsville Beach in 1947 and this is the same house that Zander and his daughter Bellamy currently enjoy. After weathering several renovations and hurricanes, this coastal beach cottage is where fond summer memories are made. Zander grew up fishing, swimming and surfing on Wrightsville Beach and from this he grew an extensive knowledge of the changing area that has proven to be very beneficial to his clients. As well as loving the "salt" life, Zander is a very accomplished gardener with a special love for camellias: a special trait that was passed down from his father. Zander is very involved in the community and is an active member of multiple foundations and clubs.

The Alexander Koonce Team believes in three main principles. First, "It's not about transactions, it's about relationships." Second, "Treat each client as though he or she is the only one", and lastly "Always go above and beyond what's expected, because we're typically dealing with a client's largest investment or more importantly, their family's home." This understanding and attention to detail, along with his building and development expertise, are what have gained Zander multiple accreditations. Zander has personally closed over $250 million in his real estate career and continues to build his thriving team. His expertise on historic trends, and research as well as his deep love and knowledge of the area's market is what makes Alexander Koonce a consistent Top Producer for Intracoastal Realty.

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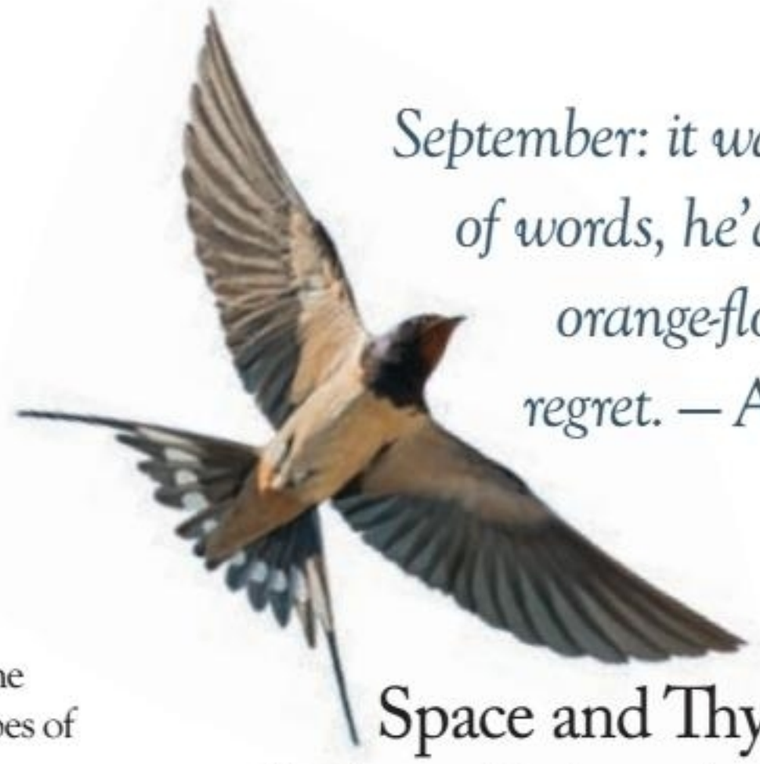
ALMANAC

September



September: it was the most beautiful of words, he'd always felt, evoking orange-flowers, swallows, and regret. — Alexander Theroux

By Ash Alder

As the last swallowtail glides above the golden landscape, disappearing beyond the sunflower graveyard like a dream, the babes of summer lament.

Gallon-bags of blackberries packed in the freezer, and yet we cannot hold this glorious season, cannot ask the crickets to extend their song.

A dwindling procession of bees draw their final sips from the flowering crape myrtle, and as the leaves begin their epic descent, the days grow shorter. There is nothing to chase, nothing to grasp, nothing to do but watch the light fade.

A song of heartbreak from my college years compared the end of summer — the end of a romance — to the end of a carnival.

"We watched the season pull up its own stakes . . . " it began.

My heart has since learned the dance of deep surrender, yet the line continues to haunt me, a reminder of nature's constant transience — and our own.

We all know what it's like to witness the unraveling of sometime magnificent. But how often do we notice that it takes an unraveling to see clearly the beauty of what was right in front of us?

In the words of T.S. Eliot, "the end is where we start from."

Leave it to a poet born in September to pen such a line. And as summer disappears with the last of the fireflies, consider its truth.

We are starting anew.

Autumn is the grand exhale. An unraveling that, if you're open to it, just might be the very magic you thought you were missing.

Stay Golden

Flowering goldenrod paints our late summer landscape dreamy, and yet it may hear its name and cringe.

Well-known for its healing properties, goldenrod is a wild edible whose thick clusters of flowers are not, contrary to the popular misbelief, causing your seasonal allergies to flare up. Only wind-pollinated plants can do that. (We're on to you, ragweed.)

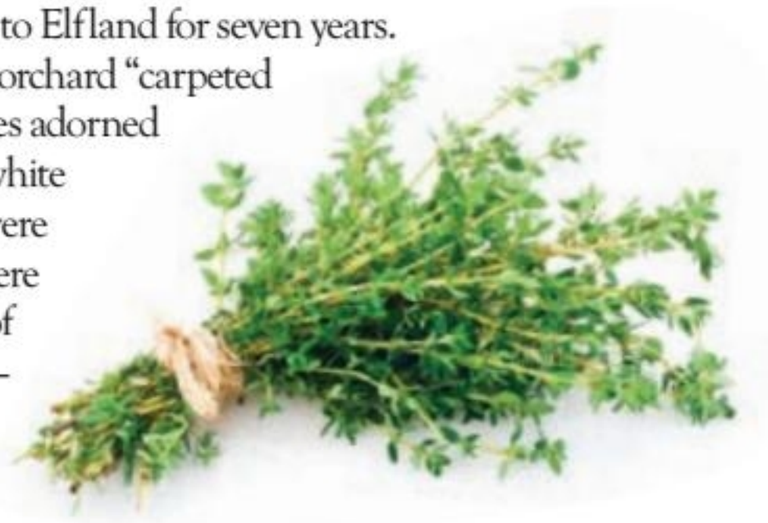
Now that we've got that out of the way . . . tea?

The Nerdy Farm Wife suggests using two tablespoons of fresh goldenrod flowers (or one tablespoon of dried flowers) per one cup of water. Cover and steep for 15–20 minutes, then strain. If you've got it, raw honey will sweeten the pot.

Space and Thyme

The Autumnal Equinox arrives on Monday, Sept. 23. Until then, it seems we're floating between worlds, watching the age-old dance of blossom and decay.

Years ago, my brother suggested I read *Thomas the Rhymer*, a fantasy novel by Ellen Kushner based on a ballad by the same name. In the book, a traveling minstrel is seduced by a fairy queen and taken to Elfland for seven years.



Kushner describes an orchard "carpeted in soft grass," with trees adorned with "their pink and white blossoms — no, they were fresh green leaves — were summer-rich boughs of peaches and apricots — were the ripe tang of autumn fruit . . . "

Thomas narrates:

"Every time I looked I saw and breathed a different season. It dizzied my senses."

I think I know exactly what he means.

And as all seasons seem to exist simultaneously, it's time to bring our herbs inside, place them beside the sunny window, acknowledge the inevitable arrival of frost like a distant song growing strong and clear.

Parsley, sage, rosemary and thyme . . .

Speaking of thyme, among its many medicinal uses, which include bone health and blood pressure control, the favorite herb is said to cure acne, prevent hair loss and remedy the common cold. Many ancient cultures also share the belief that carrying a sprig of thyme would protect one from negativity. If only Thomas the Rhymer had tucked some up his sleeve . . .

In the Garden

September harvest is kaleidoscopic. Deep purple eggplant, red and yellow peppers, salad greens and early winter squash.

The fun is just beginning.

Now's time to plant mustard, onion, radish and turnip, crimson clover and hairy vetch.

Just don't forget the peonies. PS

Arts Calendar

The Gipsy Kings in Concert

9/7

James and the Giant Peach

9/13-15

An American Ascent Movie

9/26

To add a calendar event, please contact calendar@saltmagazinenc.com. Events must be submitted by the first of the month, one month prior to the event.

9/1 *Wolfcrush*: A Queer Werewolf Play
3 p.m. Pineapple-Shaped Lamps presents a dark comedy that explores gay life in a Southern high school with a bloodthirsty werewolf on the loose. Admission: $20-$25. Thalian Hall, 310 Chestnut St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 632-2285 or thalianhall.org.

9/5 Glasswork: One Material, Infinite Possibilities
5:30 - 7 p.m. CAB Art Gallery presents "Glassworks: One Material, Infinite Possibilities," a group show of works by North Carolina glass artists. Admission: Free. UNCW Cultural Arts Building, 5270 Randall Drive, Wilmington. For info: uncw.edu/cabartgallery.

9/5 GLOW Academy Grand Opening Celebration
5 p.m. - 10 p.m. Join celebrity chefs Emeril Lagasse, Guy Fieri and Robert Irvine to celebrate the grand opening of the Girls Leadership Academy of Wilmington (GLOW). There will be cocktails and small plates as well as a campus tour. Tickets: $250. GLOW Academy, 4100 Sunglow Drive, Wilmington. For info: (910) 338-5258.

9/5-8 *Shakespeare in Love*
7:30 p.m.; Sunday at 3 p.m. The Opera Theatre Company of Wilmington presents the romantic comedy *Shakespeare in Love* , based on the star-crossed lovers Will Shakespeare and his muse Viola. Admission: $20-$32. Thalian Hall, 310 Chestnut St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 632-2285 or thalianhall.org.

9/6 Dining In Style
5 - 7 p.m. Big Sky Design presents "Dining in Style," an evening of cocktails and hors d'oeuvres with six unique dining schemes — from Old World Maximalism to Eco Chic — to inspire your holiday entertaining. Tickets: $15. Big Sky Design, 4037 Masonboro Loop Rd., Wilmington. For info: (910) 793-3992 or bigskydesignonline.com.

9/6- Wilmington Boat Show
Friday, 12 - 6 p.m.; Saturday, 10 - 6 p.m.; Sunday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The Wilmington Boat Show comes to town with more than 80 exhibitors and a variety of in-water boat displays and fishing and sailing seminars at the Port City Marina, Point Harbor Marina and the Wilmington Convention Center. Admission: $5-$15. For info: wilmingtonboatshow.com.

9/7 The Gipsy Kings in Concert
7:30 p.m. Celebrated flamenco group The Gipsy Kings comes to the Wilson Center for one night only. Admission: $48-$91. Wilson Center, 703 N. Third St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 362-7999 or cfcc.edu/capefearstage/gipsy-kings-2.

9/7 Bellamy Birthday Bash
7 p.m. Celebrate the museum's 25th anniversary with music and dancing, as well as a silent auction and birthday cake. Admission: $40-$50. Bellamy Mansion Museum, 503 Market St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 251-3700 or bellamymansion.org.

9/7 SEA/SNC South End Surfing Contest
8 a.m. The Crystal Pier in Wrightsville Beach is the setting for the Eastern Surfing Association's amateur surfing event for all ages. Admission: Free. South Lumina Avenue at Nathan St., Wrightsville Beach. For info: esa.snc.com.

9/7 3rd Annual We Just Want to Play Volleyball Tournament and Raffle
11 a.m.-4 p.m. Proceeds from this day-long tournament benefit local high school music programs. Admission: Free. Registration for four-person coed teams: $80-$100. Captain Bill's Backyard Grill, 4240 Market St., Wilmington. For info: (910) 762-0173 or info@wejustwanttoplay.org.

9/7 The Arty Party
6 p.m.-9 p.m. This benefit for the Arts Council of Wilmington/New Hanover County will feature lively performances, artwork, and food and drinks. Tickets: $100. KGB ILM, 19 Princess St., Wilmington. For info: (910) 343-0998 or artscouncilofwilmington.org.

9/7 Low Country Boil
4 p.m. - 7 p.m. The North Carolina Coastal Federation hosts a Low Country Boil at the Hanover Seaside Club, featuring live music and a silent auction. Tickets: $50-$60. Hanover Seaside Club, 601 S. Lumina Ave., Wrightsville Beach. For info: (910) 509-2838 or nccoast.org.

9/9 Paws Place Dog Rescue Sixth Annual Golf Outing
This annual event features cash prizes and a shotgun start. 10:30 registration and 11:00 lunch is followed by golf at noon. Admission: $175. Country Club of Landfall, 1550 Landfall Drive, Wilmington. For info: pawsplace.org/golf-outing-sept-9-2019.

9/10 Steel Pulse in Concert
6 p.m. Greenfield Lake Amphitheater is the setting for an evening with legendary reggae band Steel Pulse. Admission: $30-$35. Kids under 11 admitted free. Greenfield Lake Amphitheater, 1941 Amphitheater Drive, Wilmington. More info: (910) 343-0983 or greenfieldlake-amphitheater.com.

9/11-15 *The Exonerated*
8 p.m.; Sunday at 3 p.m. Big Dawg Productions presents *The Exonerated*, the true story of six death row inmates who were wrongfully convicted. Admission: $15-$25. Cape Fear Playhouse, 613 Castle St., Wilmington. For info: (910) 367-5237 or bigdawgproductions.org.

9/12 Run For a Life
6 p.m. This untimed 1-mile run and 4.2-mile timed race benefit prostate cancer awareness in Wilmington. Admission: $15-$40. Greenfield Lake Park, 301 Willard St., Wilmington. For info: (910) 454-7134 or its-go-time.com/run-for-a-life.

9/12 Wilmington Life Expo
10 a.m.-4 p.m. A group exhibition of vendors featuring health and wellness, health screenings, assisted living, travel, real estate and much more. Admission: Free. Wilmington Convention Center, 515 Nutt St., Wilmington. For info: (910) 343-2015 or gatehouselive.com/expos/life/wilmington.

9/13-15 *James and the Giant Peach*
7:30 p.m.; Sunday at 3 p.m. Thalian Association Community Theatre presents Roald Dahl's classic, *James and the Giant Peach*. Tickets: $15. Community Arts Center, 120 S. Second St., Wilmington. For info: (910) 251-1788 or thalian.org.

9/14 I Am Beautiful Fashion Show
6 p.m. This benefit evening for the Miracle League and the Cape Fear Enrichment Program features a fashion show for models with disabilities, music and dance performances, and a raffle. Admission: Free. Pine Valley United Methodist Church, 3788 Shipyard Blvd., Wilmington. For info: pvumc.net.

9/14 Annual Pier-2-Pier Swim Race
9 a.m. This annual contest spans the 1.7-mile distance between Johnnie Mercers Pier and Crystal Pier. Johnnie Mercers Pier, 23 E. Salisbury St., Wrightsville Beach. For info and registration: (910) 256-2743 or johnniemercers-fishingpier.com.

9/14 Carolina Beach Inshore Challenge
7 a.m.- 6 p.m. This fishing competition is based on the heaviest single flounder or red drum per boat. Cash purse of more than $15,000. Admission: $125-$150. Inlet Watch Marina, 801 Paoli Court, Wilmington. For info: (910) 452-6378 or fishermanspost.com/tournaments/cbic.

9/14 American Craft Walk
10 a.m.-5 p.m. More than 90 local and regional artisans will display their wares in historic downtown Wilmington. Admission: Free. Front St., Wilmington. For info: (732) 691-7834 or americancraftwalkwilmington.com.

9/19 Ragamala Dance Company: Sacred Earth
7:30 p.m. *The New York Times* called the Ragamala Dance Company "soulful, imaginative, and rhythmically contagious." The troupe performs *Sacred Earth* tonight at the Kenan Auditorium. Admission: $25-$75. Kenan Auditorium, UNCW, 515 Wagoner Drive, Wilmington. For info: uncw.edu/arts/presents/2019-2020/ragamala.html.

9/19 4th Annual Men's Basketball Tipoff Dinner
7 p.m. Tonight's keynote speaker is John Calipari, men's basketball coach at the University of Kentucky. Burney Center, UNCW, 601 S. College Road, Wilmington. For info and tickets: uncwsports.com.

9/20 Kids Making It Fundraising Luncheon
11:30 a.m. Today's keynote speaker is Norm Abram, the star of *This Old House* and *The New Yankee Workshop*. Admission: Free. Donations encouraged. First Baptist Church Activities Center, 1939 Independence Blvd., Wilmington. For info: (910) 763-6001 or kidsmakingit.org.

9/20-21 Carolina Beach Dragon Boat Regatta
Gather a group of friends and neighbors and enter the sixth annual Dragon Boat Regatta and Festival. Proceeds go directly to benefit Step Up for Solders, which recognizes the challenges of recently disabled veterans. Admission: Free for spectators. Carolina Beach Yacht Basin and Marina, 216 Canal Drive, Carolina Beach. For info and registration: carolinabeachdragonboat.com.

9/21 Wilmington Symphony Orchestra Concert
7:30 p.m. "Brahms and More" features a program of Brahms and Tchaikovsky with a special appearance by Sphinx Competition award winner Sterling Elliott on cello. Wilson Center, 703 N. Third St., Wilmington. Tickets and info: (910) 362-7999 or cfcc.edu.

9/21 YMCA Wrightsville Beach Spirit Triathlon
7 a.m. This competition will feature a 1,350-yard swim, 11.5-mile bike ride and a 5K run. Admission: $45-$115. 321 Causeway Drive, Wrightsville Beach. For info: (910) 251-9622 or trisignup.com/Race/NC/WrightsvilleBeach/YMCAWBSprint.

9/21 Clutch: Barbershop Quartet Concert
7:30 p.m. The Dallas-based award-winning vocal group

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Clutch will perform a Barbershop Quartet concert this evening. Admission: Free. St. Andrews-Covenant Presbyterian Church, 1416 Market St., Wilmington. For info: (910) 762-9693 or clutchquartet.com.

9/21-9/23; 9-27-29 Fall Used Book Sale
Friday, 5:30-9 p.m.; Saturday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.; Sunday, 1-5 p.m. The Friends of the New Hanover Public Library hosts their semiannual used book sale this weekend. Admission: Free. Northeast Regional Library, 1241 Military Cutoff Road, Wilmington. For info: (910) 798-6371 or nhclibrary.org.

9/21-22 Maze Craze
Saturday, 11 a.m.-9 p.m.; Sunday, 1-8 p.m. Galloway Farm hosts its annual Maze Craze, featuring hayrides, duck races, scavenger hunts and mazes. Admission: $10. Galloway Farm, 372 Artesia Road, Hallsboro. For info: ncmazecraze.com.

9/22 Chamber Music Wilmington Concert
4 p.m. Today's concern features the band Acronym, which is known for its vivid imagination and musical humor as well as fancy fiddling. The program: "Cabinet of Curiosities: Baroque Beyond Handel and Corelli." Admission: $30. Beckwith Recital Hall, 5270 Randall Drive, Wilmington. For info: (910) 962-3500 or chambermusicwilmington.org.

9/24 Four Italian Tenors
7:30 p.m. Roberto Cresca, Federico Parisi, Federico Serra and Alberto Urso perform tenor arias created especially for this tour, their first in the United States. Admission: $28-$57. Wilson Center, 703 N. Third St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 362-7999 or cfcc.edu.

9/24 A Taste of the Town
6 p.m. Restaurants in downtown Wilmington have partnered with Thalian Hall for a traveling dinner party. Guests will receive a map and venture out to a variety of participating venues and sample special dishes. Proceeds benefit Thalian Hall. Admission: $50. Thalian Hall, 310 Chestnut St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 632-2285 or thalianhall.org.

9/26 *An American Ascent*
5:30 p.m. *American Ascent* is a documentary film about the first African-American expedition to climb Denali, North America's highest peak. Admission: Free. Greenfield Lake Amphitheater, 1941 Amphitheater Drive, Wilmington. For info: wilmingtonrecreation.com.

9/27-29 *Matilda – The Musical*
7:30 p.m.; Sunday, 3 p.m. The Thalian Association Community Theatre production of Roald Dahl's classic, *Matilda: The Musical*. Tickets: $32. Thalian Hall, 310 Chestnut St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 632-2285 or thalianhall.org.

9/28 North Carolina Symphony Orchestra Concert
7:30 p.m. Tonight's program includes Mozart's *Symphony No. 31*, Elgar's *Enigma Variations*, and *Sea Sketches* by Grace Williams. Admission: $47. Wilson Center, 703 N. Third St., Wilmington. Info: (877) 627-6724 or cfcc.edu.

9/29 Swim the Loop and Mott's Channel Sprint
8 a.m. - 11 a.m. Swim the Loop (3.5 miles) and the Mott's Channel Sprint (1.3 miles) are both swim races that begin at the Dockside Restaurant. Admission: $45-$90. Dockside Restaurant and Marina, 1308 Airlie Road, Wilmington. For info: (910) 256-2752 or runsignup.com/Race/NC/Wilmington/SwimtheLoop.

WEEKLY HAPPENINGS

Monday Wrightsville Farmers Market
8 a.m. – 1 p.m. Curbside beach market offering a variety of fresh, locally grown produce, baked goods, plants, and unique arts and crafts. Seawater Lane, Wrightsville Beach. Info: (910) 256-7925 or www.townofwrightsvillebeach.com.

Tuesday Wine Tasting
6 p.m. – 8 p.m. Free wine tasting hosted by a wine professional plus small plate specials all night. Admission: Free. The Fortunate Glass, 29 South Front St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 399-4292 or www.fortunateglass.com.

Tuesday Cape Fear Blues Jam
8 p.m. A night of live music performed by the area's best blues musicians. Bring your instrument and join in the fun. Admission: Free. The Rusty Nail, 1310 South Fifth Ave., Wilmington. Info: (910) 251-1888 or www.capefearblues.org.

Wednesday Free Wine Tasting at Sweet n Savory Cafe
5 p.m. – 8 p.m. Sample delicious wines for free. Pair them with a meal, dessert or appetizer and learn more about the wines of the world. Live music starts at 7. Admission: Free. Sweet n Savory Cafe, 1611 Pavilion Place, Wilmington. Info: (910) 256-0115 or www.swetnsavorycafe.com.

Wednesday Weekly Exhibition Tours
1:30 p.m. – 2 p.m. A weekly tour of the iconic Cameron Arts Museum, featuring presentations about the various exhibits and the selection and installation process. Cameron Arts Museum, 3201 South 17th St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 395-5999 or www.cameronartsmuseum.org.

Wednesday Ogden Farmers Market
8 a.m. – 1 p.m. Local farmers, producers and artisans sell fresh fruits, veggies, plants, eggs, cheese, meat, honey, baked goods, wine, bath products and more. Ogden Park, 615 Ogden Park Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 538-6223 or wilmingtonandbeaches.com/events-calendar/ogden-farmers-market.

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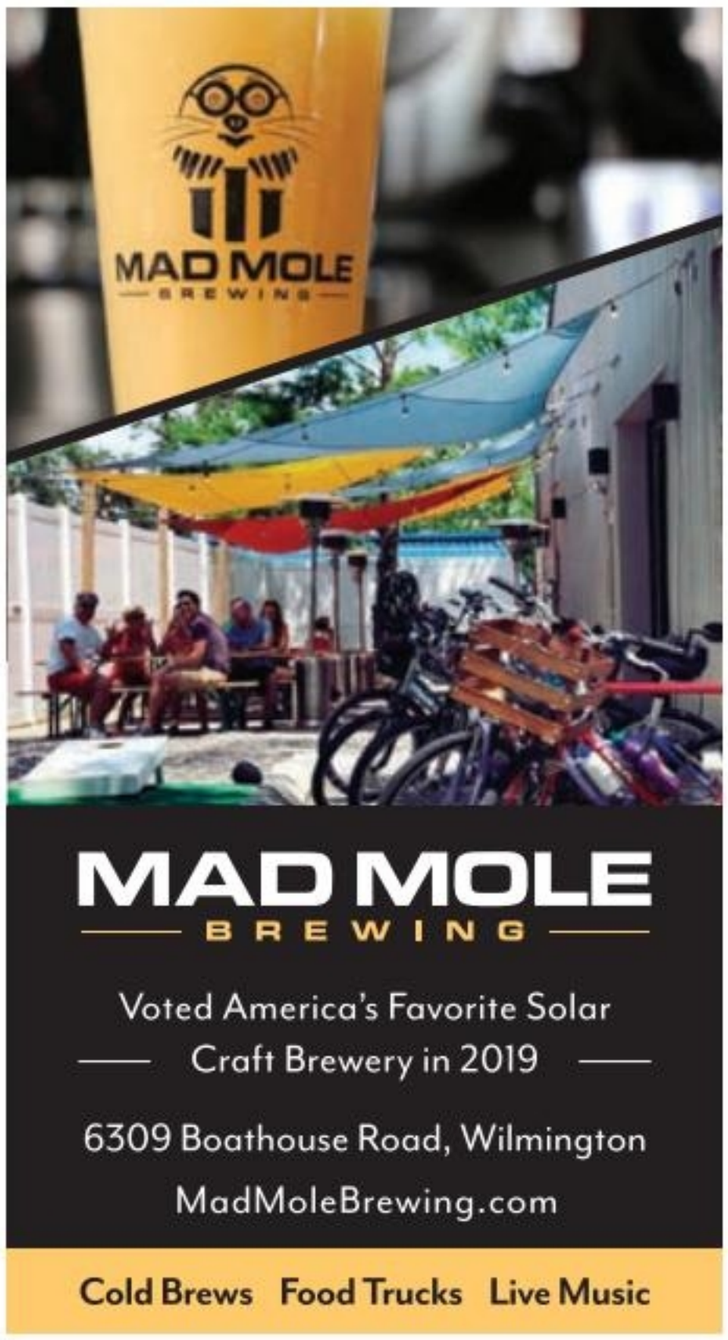

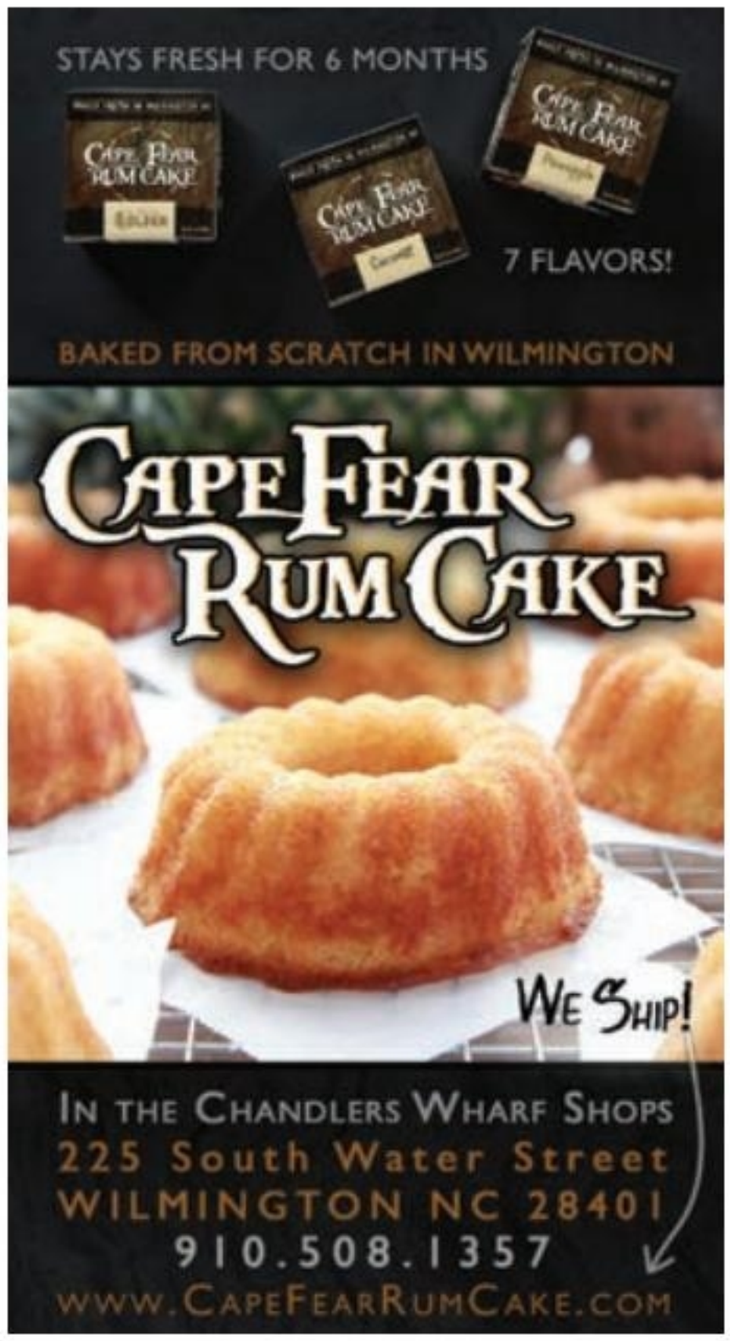

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CALENDAR

Wednesday Poplar Grove Farmers Market
8 a.m. – 1 p.m. Open-air market held on the front lawn of historic Poplar Grove Plantation offering fresh produce, plants, herbs, baked goods and handmade artisan crafts. Poplar Grove Plantation, 10200 U.S. 17 North, Wilmington. Info: (910) 395-5999 or www.poplargrove.org/farmers-market.

Thursday Wrightsville Beach Brewery Farmers Market
2 p.m. – 6 p.m. Come support local farmers and artisans every Thursday afternoon in the beer garden at the Wrightsville Beach Brewery. Shop for eggs, veggies, meat, honey and handmade crafts while enjoying one of the Brewery's tasty beers. Stay for live music afterward. Admission: Free. Wrightsville Beach Brewery, 6201 Oleander Dr., Wilmington. Info: (910) 256-4938 or www.wbbeer.com.

Thursday Yoga at the CAM
12–1 p.m. Join in a soothing retreat sure to charge you up while you relax in a beautiful, comfortable setting. Sessions are ongoing and are open to both beginners and experienced participants. Admission: $5–8. Cameron Art Museum, 3201 South 17th St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 395-5999 or www.cameronartmuseum.org.

Friday & Saturday Cape Fear Museum Little Explorers
10 a.m. Meet your friends in Museum Park for fun, hands-on activities! Enjoy interactive circle time, conduct exciting experiments, and play games related to a weekly theme. Perfect for children ages 3 to 6 and their adult helpers. Admission: Free. Cape Fear Museum, 814 Market St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 798-4370 or www.capefearmuseum.com.

Friday & Saturday Blackwater Adventure Tours
Join in an educational guided boat tour from downtown Wilmington to River Bluffs, exploring the mysterious beauty of the Northeast Cape Fear River. See website for schedule. River Bluffs, 1100 Chair Road, Castle Hayne. Info: (910) 623-5015 or www.riverbluffsliving.com.

Saturday Carolina Beach Farmers Market
8 a.m. – 1 p.m. Outdoor "island-style" market featuring live music and local growers, producers and artisans selling fresh local produce, wines meats, baked goods, herbal products and handmade crafts. Carolina Beach Lake Park, Highway 421 and Atlanta Avenue, Carolina Beach. Info: (910) 458-2977 or www.carolinabeachfarmersmarket.com.

Saturday Wilmington Farmers Market at Tidal Creek
8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Weekly gathering of vetted vendors with fresh produce straight from the farm. Sign up for the weekly newsletter for advanced news of the coming weekend's harvest. 5329 Oleander Drive, Wilmington. For info: thewilmingtonfarmersmarket.com.

Saturday Riverfront Farmers Market
8 a.m. – 1 p.m. Curbside market featuring local farmers, producers, artisans, crafters and live music along the banks of the Cape Fear River. Riverfront Park, North Water St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 538-6223 or www.wilmington-downtown.com/events/farmers-market.

Saturday Taste of Downtown Wilmington
2:15 p.m., 2:45 p.m., 3:15 p.m. A weekly gourmet food tour by Taste Carolina, featuring some of downtown Wilmington's best restaurants. Each time slot showcases different food. See website for details. Admission: $55–75. Riverwalk at Market St., 0 Market St., Wilmington. Info: (919) 237-2254 or www.tastecarolina.net/wilmington/.

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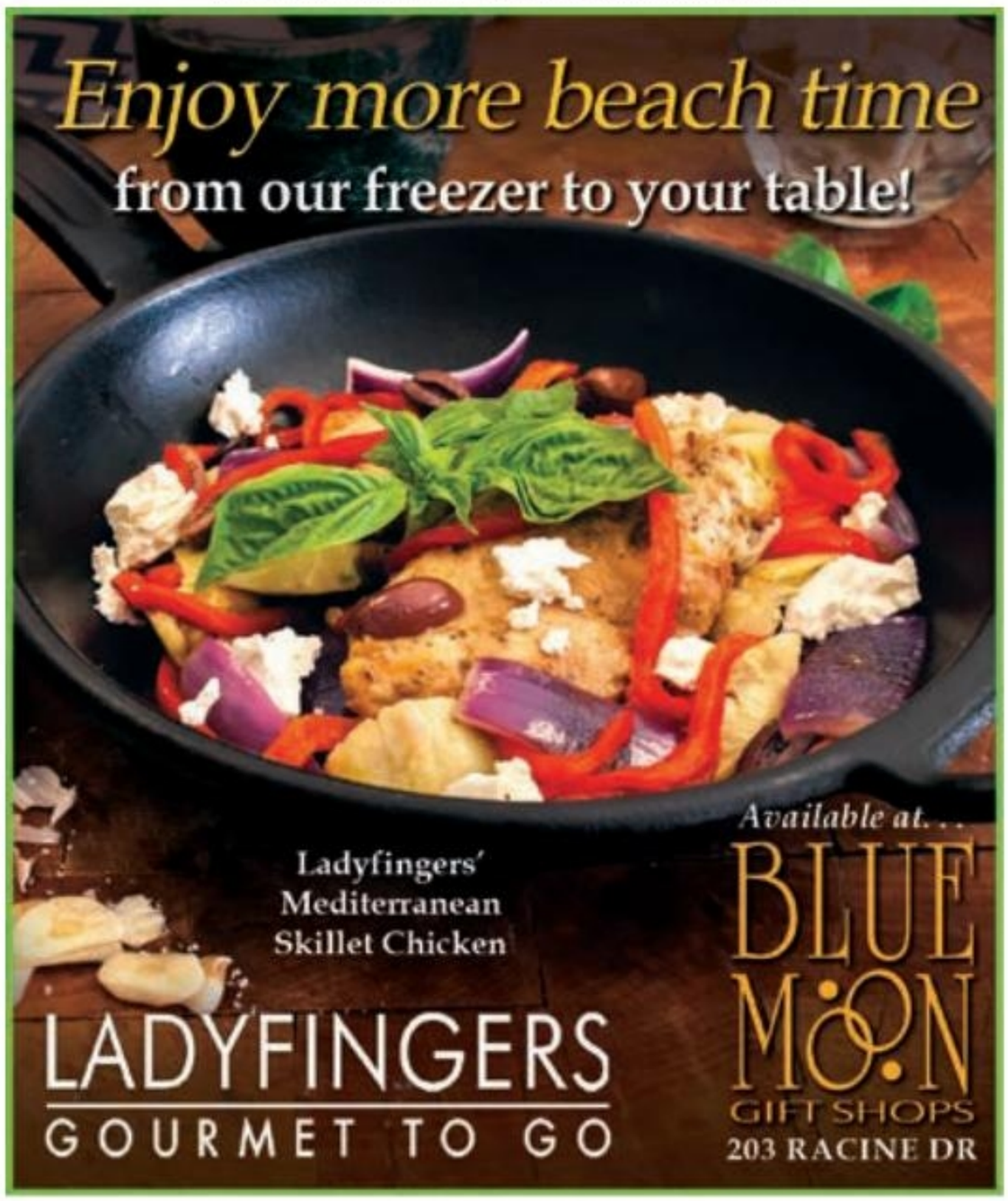

ARTS & CULTURE

Port City People

Wright Holman Shrimperoo

Benefitting the Wrightsville Beach Museum
Motts Channel Seafood

Saturday, June 22, 2019

Photographs by Bill Ritenour

Tom Hanna,Peggy Daughtry, Brook Holman,Walt Lackey

Scott & Pernilla Kanyok, Jessica Schreiber

Michael & Patti Jacaruso

Will Head, Laura Jones

Wylene & Bob McDonald

Hannah, Deanna, Jay & Madison McClung

Jocelyne & Reggie Barnes

Angela Rowe,Rhesa Stone, Freddie Butler

Kathy Gresham, Jeanne Thome, DeLaine Ferrell, Jessica Schreiber

Pam Miller, Casi Healey, Lisa Shriver

ARTS & CULTURE

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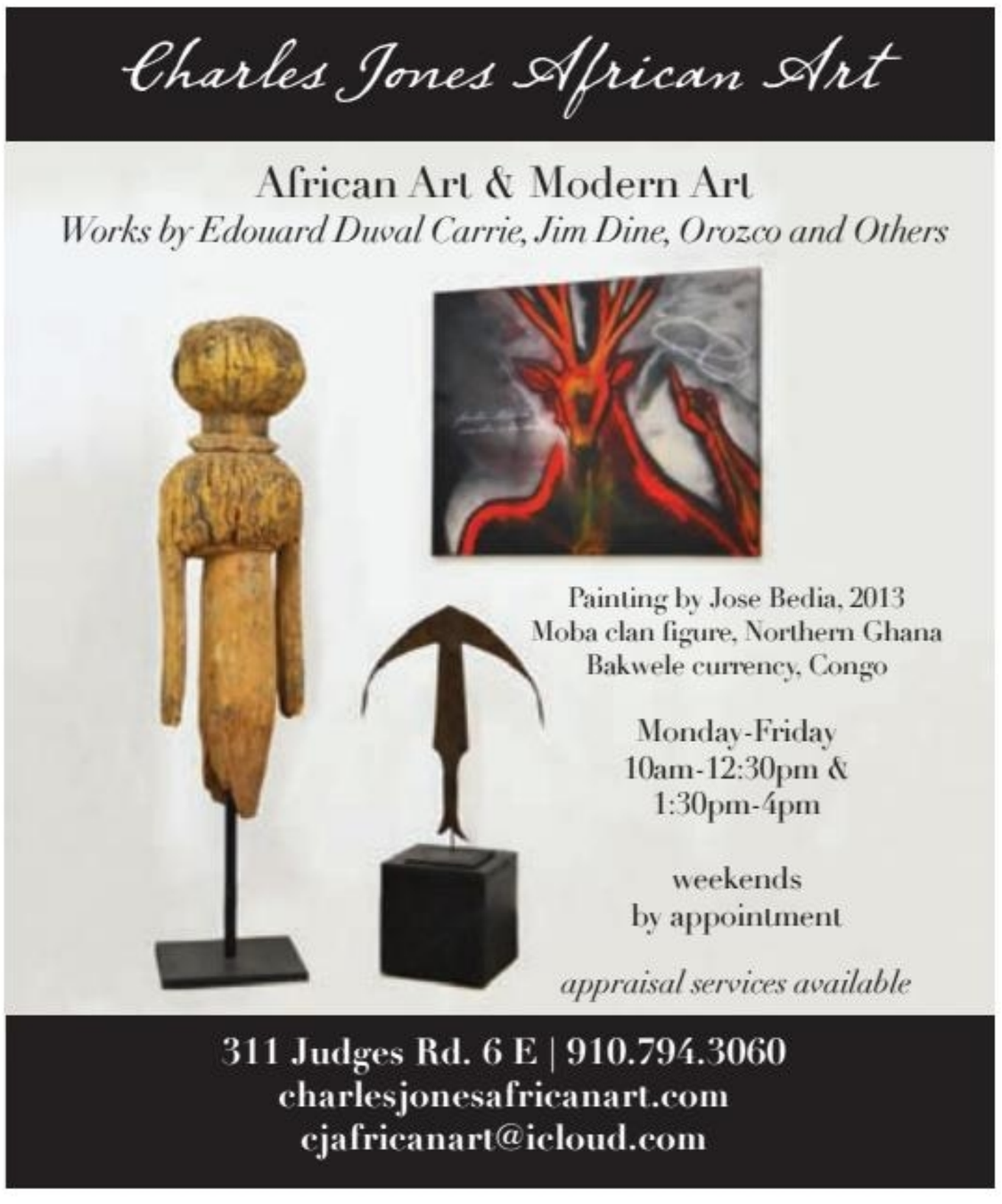

Port City People

2019 Literacy Luncheon

A Benefit for the Cape Fear Literacy Council
Pine Valley United Methodist Church

Tuesday, June 25, 2019

Photographs by Bill Ritenour

CFLC'S Readers' Theater Performers

Derek McLeod, Yasmin Tomkinson, Catheryn Thomas

Alan Perry

Yasmin Tomkinson, Blair Kutrow, Dana McKoy, Nancy Scott Finan, Kelly Sechrist

Back Row (l-r) Barbara Pearson, Sofonda Edwards, Thomas Temoney, Vincent Durant
Front Row (l-r) Lacy Tate, Janice Bryant, Wille Lee Brown, Carolyn James

Rob Zapple, Erin Payne

Mark Ethridge

Anne Stokley, Laura Blalock

Phyllis Goss, Mark Ethridge (signing book)

Port City People

Annual Raider Ball Fundraiser

Raising funds for Members of Marine Corps Special Forces Operations Command

Saturday, July 27, 2019

Photographs by Bill Ritenour

Jennifer Cuevas, Kellie Sharrock, Megan Clock, Jacinta Shoop

Ashton Martin, Mat & Mindy Callen

Joe & Kailey Weimer

Megan & Tyler Tyson

Tim & Kayse Lavin

Sharon & Jake Godfrey, Alex Eye, Kerry Gwyn

Phil Taylor, Taylor Lovelady

Cody Garrett, Kaley Randolph

Nick & Brittany Rumple

Hannah Delacourt, Jason Smith, Savannah Holman

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Port City People

8th Annual Pipeline to a Cure

Hosted by Cystic Fibrosis - Carolinas Chapter

Saturday, August 3, 2019

Photographs by Bill Ritenour

Cameron Rhodes, Emma Suber, Sam & Catie Blair

Trey Oakes, Natalie McCorquodale, Kate & Quinn Lancaster

Rachel Urbin, Rob Dunham, Laura King

Nathan & Kimberly Houston, Amy & Mark Hayes

Kristine & Dr. Ashly Smith, Veronica & Matt Banning

Karina & Ali Ghiassi, Meagan Vaughn

Maggie & Alston Hatch

Mike & Taylor Doyle

Kevin O'Grady, Diane Guida

Donna & Eric Hickman

Guts, Game and the Good Life

Virgos have it all

By Astrid Stellanova

By September, ole summertime holds on like the last drop of sweat. September-born Virgo children have guts and game — and a taste for the good life, especially if you can plate it or pour it in a fancy glass. A few: Queen Elizabeth I, Prince Harry, Greta Garbo and Lauren Bacall, and the first woman to run for President, Victoria Woodhull. To that add a short list of a long list of actors: Charlie Sheen, Danielle Brooks, Lily Tomlin, Michael Keaton and Salma Hayek. Plum crazy, right? Virgo birthday celebrations sizzle like frog legs (or fried chicken) in a cast-iron pan. The Colonel himself, Harlan Sanders, was a finger-lickin' Virgo. Let's talk food and drink, Star Children.

Virgo (August 23–September 22)
That famous old curmudgeon Hemingway said he drank to make other people interesting. What makes you break out the bubbly? If nothing else, celebrate a year of wild-child creativity at the cusp. This may just be your best year ever, Sugar Foot. So hit the dance floor, do the worm, get down tonight; and savor that muscadine slurpee.

Libra (September. 23–October 22)
The slump you've been in is going to come to an end. Best of all, you will have a breakthrough versus a breakdown. Somebody close to you is biting their tongue and you owe them. Treat 'em right; your tastes in spirits are downright amazing, and you owe more than one round.

Scorpio (October 23–November 21)
When you did one of those drink-and-paint the ducky nights, turns out you sure do have a gift — for drinking. Don't sulk, because your ducky was the most original. Originality is one of your trademarks, but so is radio silence, Honey. Open up and call a friend.

Sagittarius (November 22–December 21)
You got catfished. Conned. But it wasn't all a failure, Sugar. The catfish in life keep the rest of us on our tippy toes. You won't be caught again. And, it keeps you intrigued. Plus, catfish themselves are pretty damn tasty dipped in corn meal and fried up.

Capricorn (December 22–January 19)
Your mouth may be saying cheese, chocolate and a malted, but your jeans are saying, for goddsakes, order soup and salad. The bingeing was fun, Honey Bun, but now it's done and get your sweet self back in training for that killer fall wardrobe you wanna rock.

Aquarius (January 20–February 18)
You get emotional just doing the Happy Baby pose in yoga. And you have been known to express your feelings in the most unusual ways, Sugar. Whatever has made you so vulnerable is intensifying but will release by the month's end so you find a way to chill without a smoothie or a milkshake.

Pisces (February 19–March 20)
Innocent soybeans died for your veggie burger, Sugar. You have imposed a lot of strict ideas on yourself and others, but remember you can't survive without making a lot of choices. And some are going to be far harder than skipping a mouth-watering bacon cheeseburger.

Aries (March 21–April 19)
Well, a good friend just pickled your okra, didn't they? Now you have to put up or shut up, which is a Devil's bargain. There's no shame in just holding back one more hot minute before you unload your bucket. Patience is going to be your best ally.

Taurus (April 20–May 20)
Sure, you can make wine disappear, but, Honey, that is not some kind of a super power. Not exactly. But, in one way, the best thing you can do is keep your mouth full, because not everybody is buying what you have been selling lately.

Gemini (May 21–June 20)
You are at a crossroads, Sweet Pea. Can you be honest all of the time? Because you have hurt some people who care about you and left them wondering if you care for them. Do not feel compelled to tell Aunt Ida her cooking stinks. She's too old and too tired from a lifetime at the hot stove.

Cancer (June 21–July 22)
You towed your bass boat to the wrong lake. You backed into the wrong situation. Maybe you put in, maybe you fished, but you are in the wrong place, Honey. If you can find a graceful exit, go home and grill the catch of the day before you get hooked.

Leo (July 23–August 22)
Were you slurring or trying to talk in cursive, Sugar? Seriously, you were way more entertaining than you even remember. Now you have to get some steel in your back and face up to a situation that will require you to be sober and serious — if only about what you will cook for dinner.

For years, Astrid Stellanova owned and operated Curl Up and Dye Beauty Salon in the boondocks of North Carolina until arthritic fingers and her popular astrological readings provoked a new career path.

Back to the School of Life

Where we're all graded on the curve

By Deborah Salomon

Back to school is one calendar event that justifies commercialization. Makes sense that over the summer kids grow out of clothes and shoes. They need notebooks and backpacks and haircuts. But the very phrase provokes mixed memories: being the "new girl" from Mars in a class where the other kids' mothers had been BFFs . . . not good. Freshman year at Duke, getting lost first day of classes . . . terrifying. Next three years . . . glorious. It also reminds me of what I did and didn't learn beyond the three R's and other "core curriculum" requirements, now gone with the wind.

Then, my practical side conjures ways to incorporate life skills into a syllabus. Sociology, for example. This people science would benefit from a segment on obituaries. Fascinating, how people's lives progress, how names modernized (Ida's granddaughters Skye and Madison), then returned to Emma and Sarah, Dorothy and Frances. Obits bid farewell to the last generation of "homemakers" who knitted and gardened and taught Sunday School; wording finally recognizes domestic and/or same-sex partnerships. Obits prove pets' importance for the isolated and lonely. Also how death has become a social event, with jokes, casual descriptions of the deceased, and receptions at the golf club or restaurant occasionally replacing a funeral.

Death rituals are vital to studying society. Reference the ancient Egyptians.

If I taught history or economics I might require students to Google their previous homes. Shocker alert! If the property has been recently on the market, the Realtor might post a virtual tour. The tiny two-bedroom New York City apartment in a then-nice neighborhood where I grew up became junkie junction before the tide turned. Our rent in the 1940s was about $50; now, the apartment rents for nearly $3K. Or, buy it for $400K.

Anyway, seeing empty rooms with gleaming floors where once you played can be an unsettling experience.

Phys. Ed. majors (previously known as jocks) need a course in athletic attire, especially footwear, which may cost more than Italian leather loafers. Brands speak allegiance. Mustn't wear shoes endorsed by your fave's arch rival.

Seems like medical/dental students already take advanced placement courses in office décor. I am all too familiar with reception and treatment rooms of local dentists, oral surgeons, endodontists and prosthodontists. No periodonture yet but the night is young. My dentist's office is a happy place staffed by happy people who could not possibly inflict pain. It keeps the latest issues of the best magazines. Sometimes I arrive early, just to read them. Another provider has water babbling into a rocky pond—which sends me straight to the restroom. My latest specialist offers a glass-front mini-fridge stocked with bottled water, also a Keurig machine, as well as tufted leather sofas and landscapes by a prominent local artist. The common feature: birdfeeders, sometimes formal gardens, placed in view of treatment chaise lounges. Very soothing, as is the music, either classical or Billy Joel-style soft rock. Makes you almost look forward to a root canal.

The providers' subliminal message: I am good. I am successful. I can afford the niceties.

Agreed. I will gladly put my money where my mouth is. Nobody wants a dentist with frayed upholstery and 6-month-old Field & Streams.

Wall-mounted TVs remain problematic. CNN or Fox? Don't want to frighten the horses, let alone fuel controversy among patients.

Physics is the science of matter, its motion and behavior. Parking qualifies. I am a champion parallel parker, having learned The Trick as a teenager. Since men still claim mastery of this maneuver, I suggest every girl learn it before heading out into the real world. Unfortunately, The Trick is best demonstrated, not explained, even with diagrams. You don't learn to swim on dry land. Physics 101 will now adjourn to the parking lot.

Any modern English course should include interpreting TV advertising prose. Concentrate on medications, cars, financial services (unless already covered in mathematics). Most ads belong to theater of the absurd. A cancer or cardiac patient is seen enjoying "longer life," preferably with an attractive and loving family (dog, always) at their lakeside retreat. Across the bottom scrolls, in tiny letters. "Actor portrayal. Do not expect these results," while the voice-over warns of dire complications, including death.

Likewise, car ads are just too ridiculous. No, Subaru doesn't mean love. It's simply urabus spelled backward. Once ads are mastered, English students might decipher political speeches, which dance around the subject like witches around a bonfire. Absent from political discourse will be the words YES and NO because why answer a question monosyllabically when you can prevaricate an entire paragraph?

Then, I have sensual memories of school—the woodsy aroma of a full pencil sharpener, the feel of those spongy erasers, the sight of a colored pencil rainbow in a stand-up box. The sound of an empty Thermos rattling around a metal lunch pail. The squeak of chalk against the blackboard.

Too bad an iPad provides neither smell nor squeak. Calculators obviate flash cards and Google combines dictionary, thesaurus, encyclopedia. Siri, did Mommy put a Devil Dog in my lunch box? Those organic oat and cranberry power bars stick in my teeth.

Whatever, I'd still like a mulligan. Because students outgrow sneakers and jeans, state capitals and geometry theorems, but we never outgrow school.

Deborah Salomon is a staff writer for Salt's *sister publication* PineStraw.

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272 BEACH ROAD NORTH | $2,850,000

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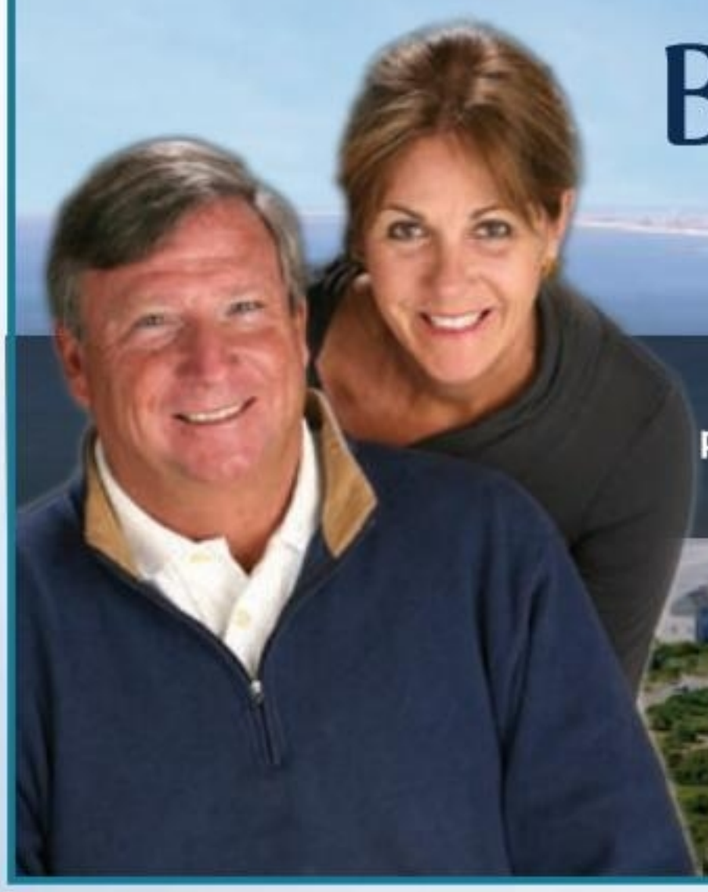
257 BEACH ROAD NORTH | $1,995,000



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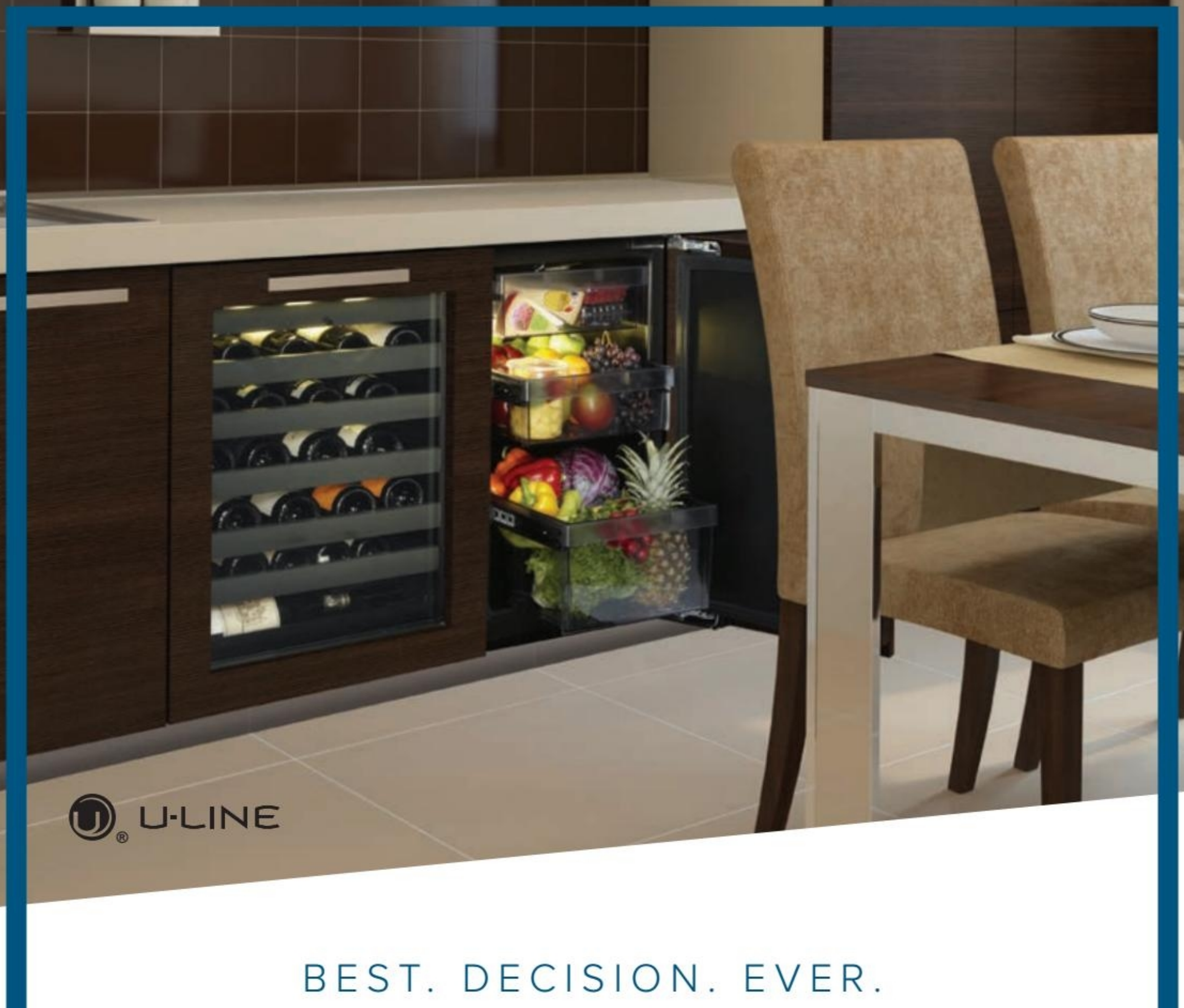

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